

PLANNING COMMISSION

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2020 - 6:30pm

Agenda

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. ROLL CALL**
- III. DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION**
 - A. 8-24 Referral - Building Management - Renovation of Jefferson School including gymnasium addition, bus loop and parking lot modifications - *Report and Recommended Action*
 - B. *Zoning Commission referral - #1-20M - Merritt Station Norwalk, LLC et al - 67, 69, 79, 87, 111, 117, 129, 135, 155, 156 & 201 Glover Avenue and 2 Oakwood Ave - Proposed change to the zoning map from AAA Residence and Business #2 zone to entirely Executive Office zone – For distribution and discussion only: action at July 21 meeting*
 - C. *Zoning Commission referral - #2-20R - Merritt Station Norwalk, LLC et al - Proposed amendments to add a new definition for Executive Office Development Park and to permit the new use in the Executive Office zone and related technical amendments – For distribution and discussion only: action at July 21 meeting*
 - D. *Zoning Commission referral - #2-20SPR - Merritt Station Norwalk, LLC et al - 67, 69, 79, 87, 111, 117, 129, 135, 155, 156 & 201 Glover Avenue and 2 Oakwood Ave – Site plan review of proposed Master Plan for Executive Office Development Park – For distribution and discussion only: action at July 21 meeting*
- IV. DISCUSSION OF OTHER ITEMS**
 - A. East Norwalk TOD plan update
 - B. Industrial Zones Study update
- V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 12, 2020**
- VI. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR**
- VII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS**
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

FUTURE MEETINGS

Planning Commission - July 21, 2020 - Time to be determined - Location to be determined

The Jefferson School Project files can be reviewed here:

<https://www.norwalkct.org/2019/Jefferson-School>

The Merritt Station/North 7 Project files can be reviewed here:

<https://www.norwalkct.org/1746/Applications-Pending>

Special Legal Requirements for this Meeting

To allow public access, anyone may access the meeting by either telephone, Zoom and/or the City of Norwalk Youtube Channel. Additional instructions for public access have been attached to the backup materials for this meeting (refer to attachment: “Participating and Attending Public Meetings Virtually). Please also see the information below concerning registration for this meeting.

Telephone Access (Listening Only)

- Dial: 646-558-8656 or 267-831-0333
- Enter Webinar ID: 851 9220 0399

Register in advance for this webinar:

- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85192200399>
- After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar

For those that just wish to view the meeting but not participate, the live stream can be seen on the City of Norwalk Youtube Channel:

- <https://www.norwalkct.org/youtube>

This meeting will also be recorded and a copy of the audio recording will be posted on the city website within seven (7) days after this meeting.



CITY OF NORWALK
Alan Lo, Buildings and Facilities Manager
alo@norwalkct.org P: 203-854-7877
Norwalk City Hall
125 East Avenue, PO Box 5125
Norwalk, CT 06856-5125

June 5, 2020

Norwalk Planning Commission
Norwalk City Hall

RE: JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – RENOVATE-AS-NEW

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Land Use and Building Management Committee of Norwalk Common Council, I am hereby referring the Jefferson Elementary School – Renovate-As-New project to the Norwalk Planning Commission for review in accordance with Section 6-24 of the Connecticut State Statutes.

Subsequent to the Board of Education adoption of the School Facilities Improvement Plan, the City allocated approximately \$33 million for the renovation as new of the Jefferson Elementary School.

With the expansion of the Ponus Ridge School to Pre-K – 8th grade model it will allow for the relief of overcrowding at Jefferson Elementary and the ability for the District to remove portable classrooms currently housing approximately 200 students. Additionally, it allows the district to renovate the existing Jefferson Elementary School, infilling existing drive-through overhang of the structure in order to expand for Pre-K classrooms. Other improvements include the construction of a new gymnasium thereby separating their current gymnasium/cafeteria/auditorium space, replace the existing electrical heating system, upgrade safety and security measures and improve the bus and parent drop off circulation by separating them and keeping them on site.

At the present time the project is proceeding on budget and on schedule. The design team, Antinozzi Associates, has completed the Conceptual Design (CD) and Schematic Design (SD) Phases of the project. We are currently proceeding with Design Development Phase (the design phase where the drawings become more detailed and construction details begin to get developed). As is consistent with the State's Office of School Construction Grants and Review (OSCG&R) process, a SD Review meeting was completed in late February, which the State granted approval for the City to move forward with the Design Development phase of the project.

Over the coming months the project drawings will continue to be developed by the design team in conjunction with the City and Board of Education. The project team will meet with the State Office of School Construction Grants & Review (OSCG&R) for a design development review meeting in late July and a final Construction Document Review in mid-December. Following these approvals the project will be put out for contractor bids

in January '21 with Construction anticipated to begin in March '21. Construction is scheduled to be completed around March '22 and ready for occupancy for 2022 fall semester.

Jefferson Elementary School - Renovate-as-New - Current Budget	
Item	Amount
Soft Costs	\$ 3,268,071.00
Construction Cost	\$ 27,694,799.00
Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment	\$ 855,000.00
Project Contingency	\$ 1,537,130.00
Total	\$ 33,355,000.00

ACTION REQUESTED:

Review and provide recommendation on the proposed Jefferson School Renovate-As-new project in accordance with Section 8-24 of the Connecticut State Statutes

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at alo@norwalkct.org

Sincerely,



Alan Lo
Buildings and Facilities Manager

Cc: Councilman Tom Livingston, Chair,
Land Use and Building Management Committee
Jim Giuliano, CSG



NORWALK PLANNING COMMISSION

125 East Avenue
Norwalk, Connecticut

MEMORANDUM

June 16, 2020

TO: Fran DiMeglio, Chair

FROM: Bryan Baker, Land Use Planner

SUBJECT: 8-24 Referral - Building Management - Renovation of Jefferson School including gymnasium addition, bus loop and parking lot modifications

The Land Use and Building Management Committee has requested that the Planning Commission review the proposed gymnasium addition, bus loop, parking lot modifications and renovations at Jefferson School for consistency with the 2019-2029 Plan of Conservation Development. The gymnasium and bus loop are proposed to be located behind the school with the entry/exit of the bus loop on Grandview Avenue. The parent dropoff loop entry/exit is to remain located on Bedford Avenue with improvements and the existing entry from Grandview Avenue will be removed. The cost of the project is estimated to be \$33,355,000. This project is considered a substantial improvement to a municipally owned building/land and is therefore subject to Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Norwalk Planning Commission that the 8-24 referral made by Building Management for the renovation of Jefferson School including a gymnasium addition, bus loop and parking lot modifications be **APPROVED** for to the following reasons:

1. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to implement “*The Modern Schools for a Growing City plan provides new and renovated schools to alleviate overcrowding and better serve students*” (Chapter 5: A Community Committed to Life-Long Education, pg. 84); and
2. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development action to “*Support sustained maintenance and renovation of all schools*” (Chapter 5: A Community Committed to Life-Long Education, pg. 92); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that notice of this action be forwarded to the Common Council.

Schedule of Height & Bulk Commercial & Industrial Part 2

Revise Article 20 Schedule of Height & Bulk Commercial & Industrial Part 2 to amend the schedule for the Executive Office zone to increase permitted building height and stories, Floor Area Ratio, Residential density and related changes as noted below:

ZONES Zoning criteria		Business #2	Executive Office	Commercial Planned Residential Development
HEIGHT	MAXIMUM	3 stories and 35 feet, except that multifamily dwellings & mixed use development to a maximum height of 4 stories and 45 feet shall be allowed	8 stories and 100 feet, except that hotels to a maximum height of 12 stories and 150 ft shall be allowed	11 stories and 125 feet
	MINIMUM	2 stories and 25 feet, subject to 118-522 C(2)	2 stories and 25 feet, subject to 118-503 C(3)	
MAXIMUM SIZE OF PLOT	AREA	12,500 sq. ft	21,780 sq. ft	21,780 sq. ft.
	WIDTH	50 feet	100 feet	100 feet
YARDS	FRONT	45 feet from centerline of street Subject to Sect 118-1000B	50 feet from centerline of street Subject to Sect 118-1000B	50 feet from centerline of street Subject to Sect 118-1000B
	SIDE	None, except where residence zone abuts, 10 feet per story or 30 feet, whichever is greater, subject to 118-1000F	None	0 feet
	AGG. SIDE	None, except where residence zone abuts, 10 feet per story or 30 feet, whichever is greater, subject to 118-1000F	None	20 feet
	REAR	10 feet, except where residence zone abuts, 10 feet per story or 30 feet, whichever is greater, subject to 118-1000F	10 feet	5 feet
MAXIMUM BUILDING AREA		50% for buildings, 80% for buildings and parking, 20% open space subject to Sect 118-522C(3)	50% for buildings, 70% for buildings and parking, 30% open space subject to Sect 118-503C(4)	50% for buildings; 70% for buildings and parking; 30% open space, subject to Sect 118-760C(3)
FLOOR AREA RATIO MAXIMUM		.7	1.0 for less than 1 acre subject to Sect 118-503C(1); 1.25 for 1 acre to 1.99 acres; 1.5 for 2 acres or larger	2.0

RECREATION AREA	*		150 sq ft per dwelling unit, subject to Sect 118-760C(2)
RESIDENTIAL DENSITY	*		500 sq ft of lot area per dwelling unit

*See D zone Residential schedule Part I for Business #2 zone density and recreation area requirements.

NOTE: No changes proposed for Business #2 and Commercial PRD zones; included for reference only.

Proposed Amendments to the Parking Requirements for North 7

Revise Article 120 Section 118-1220 Off-street Motor Vehicle Parking Requirements to revise 3 (a) Multi-family Residence to include units in a Development Park or a Commercial Planned Residential Development to and to delete 3(b)(4) Commercial Planned Residential parking requirement as noted below:

Use	Parking requirement
<p>(3) (a) Multi-Family Residence; including units in a Development Park or Commercial Planned Residential Development (Amended effective 7-11-1980; 1-16-1987; 5-18-2001; 4-27-2018; 6- 14-2019)</p>	<p>1) 1.3 parking spaces per dwelling unit; 2) for mixed use developments, the greater of 1.3 parking spaces per residential unit or the aggregate, after applying any applicable mixed-use reductions listed in §118-1220E, of the total required parking spaces for commercial uses and residential units parked at 1 space per unit.</p>
<p>(b) Residence (other) (Amended effective 1-11- 1978; 9-29-1978)</p>	
<p>(1) Planned residential development</p>	<p>2 parking spaces per dwelling unit</p>
<p>(2) Planned residential development, elderly</p>	<p>1 parking space per 2 dwelling units</p>
<p>(3) Congregate housing (Added effective 7-25- 1980)</p>	<p>1 parking space per 4 dwelling units</p>
<p>(4) Commercial planned residential development (Added effective 1-16-1987)</p>	<p>1.5 parking spaces per studio or 1-bedroom dwelling unit; 2.0 parking spaces per 2-bedroom or larger dwelling unit (A dwelling unit with 4 or more rooms shall count as 2 bedrooms.)</p>
<p>(5) Housing for the elderly</p>	<p>1 parking space per unit</p>
<p>(6) Artist Live/Work Space (Added effective 6-14-2019)</p>	<p>0.5 parking spaces per unit</p>

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMISSION
May 12, 2020**

PRESENT: Nora King, acting as Chair; Mary Peniston; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak;
Tammy Langalis; Steven Ferguson (after roll call)

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Bryan Baker

OTHERS: Tom Hamilton; Barbara Meyer-Mitchell; Ralph Valenzisis; Henry Dachowitz;
Jessica Casey; Atty Darin Callahan

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. King called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kleppin called the roll. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with all participants calling in, separately.

III. DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION

A. Special Appropriation - Board of Education - Special capital appropriation of \$1,642,470 to provide e-tablet computers for students and teachers in grades K through 8 - Report & Recommended Action

Tom Hamilton began the presentation by thanking the Planning Commission for allowing them to speak and introduced others who would be speaking. The Board of Education (BOE) has been challenged by the pandemic. Over the last several years the BOE had been moving toward having a device for each student but it had not been completed when the pandemic began. He explained that this appropriation would fund the BOE so they could make available a device for each student from the youngest to the oldest grades. He noted how many Chromebooks and Dell tablets would be provided for students as well as for teachers. It would help for the last few weeks of school as well as for summer school. He said they were expecting that schools might be closed or changed in the fall. He also discussed the possibility of a second wave of the Coronavirus so they would like to be prepared with devices for all children and teachers.

Barbara Meyer-Mitchell described the rationale for this appropriation. She noted that at the beginning of the quarantine, the K-2 children had relied on packets which was not cost effective and hard to get to them. This one size fits all did not work for children. This technology would be critical for them to prepare for the fall.

There was a discussion about the use of the packets and the use of a curriculum for the younger grades. Since learning was difficult for them as it was currently being done, it was noted that there was software that could help them.

Ralph Valenzisir said that they knew there was a problem with the younger children. He explained that the technology had to work for both the student and the parents. It was discussed how they could make it flexible for all. He also explained the different programs and apps that would be used. There was a discussion about how they would be paid for. Mr. Valenzisir noted that the teaching model was changing and that teachers would be supported. There would be weekly sessions for teachers to see the software, learn it and incorporate it into their curriculum. They would get the professional development that they needed. He thought the teachers had successfully pivoted with the programs that had been provided to them over the last few years.

There was also a discussion about refreshing the Chromebooks which Mr. Valenzisir said should be every 4 years. He noted that Altice had connected the Internet to the laptops for free. Ms. Meyer-Mitchell noted that they needed an equitable model for all students in Norwalk.

There was a discussion about whether Norwalk was ahead of other school systems in the way that Norwalk is filling the gap that was needed. There were also questions about how many computers are being bought as well as what would happen if students moved out of the district with the laptop. There was a discussion about what would happen when a device broke. Mr. Valenzisir noted that now that everyone will have a laptop they can work on programming.

There was a discussion about how much younger children would be on the laptop. Some thought it was not appropriate for them to be on-line all the time. There was also a discussion about how much interaction there was between teachers and students on-line. Ms. Meyer-Mitchell noted that there was typing programs being rolled out to the students.

Mr. Valenzisir responded to the questions about loss and support for the Chromebooks. He noted that there would be a 4 year life span for them and there would also be a warranty purchased. He also said that if there is a problem with a Chromebook, parents can exchange them for a new one. He explained the process of that, as well as what would happen if they left the district. There was also a discussion about whether any other parts of the appropriation would be a capital expense or operating expense.

There was a discussion about tracking the computers if someone has left their premises as well as if certain software programs are being used. There was also a discussion about the tech support for the equipment. Mr. Valenzisir noted that there would be on-line tech support as well as hardware tech support. He noted that hours would start next week for software support. He noted that the amount requested in the appropriation was necessary to complete the program of having a device for every student in the district. They would like to continue the model over the next few years. Mr. Hamilton noted that there would be a need to refresh the laptops over the next few years.

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***** MS. PENISTON MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning Commission that the Special Capital Appropriation request made by the City’s Board of Education for the funding of \$1,642,470 to provide e-tablet computers for students and teachers in grades K through 8 be **APPROVED** subject to the following reasons:

1. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to make "The Norwalk public school system is the most successful city school system in Connecticut, with students exceeding state average achievement and high-need students having the smallest achievement gap" (Chapter 5, pg. 270); and
2. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development policy to "Continue to support the NPS Strategic Plan to improve system performance" (Chapter 5, pg. 271); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that notice of this action be forwarded to the Common Council.

Mr. Baxendale seconded.

Ms. King read the resolution into the record. Mr. Dachowitz explained how the Finance Department had increased the amount.

Nora King; Mary Peniston; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak; Tammy Langalis; Steven Ferguson approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

B. 8-24 Referral - Temporary Right of Entry and Access Agreement over 30 Monroe Street - Report and Recommended Action

Mr. Ferguson began the presentation and introduced Jessica Casey. She apologized that the information had been late but they had not been aware of the meeting’s date change. She noted that the original application had been approved in 2018 by the Zoning Commission. The applicant needed to access the city’s property so they were requesting a temporary right of access in order to continue construction. She said they had been working with various departments on the agreement. They will seek compensation for a permanent easement, but not the temporary right of entry. She discussed the streetscape improvements which would be provided by the applicant. She also discussed where the staging would occur.

Several commissioners said that they supported the request. There was a discussion about why this was coming to them long after it had been approved. There was also a discussion about Railroad Place becoming a road or public right of way. There was a discussion as to why there was no compensation for the temporary right of access. There was also a discussion as to why the temporary right of access was necessary at the location being requested. Ms. Casey explained how the foundation would be poured with the necessary equipment.

Atty Callahan also explained how the city was handling the easement agreement. The temporary right of access was like a license. He also noted that there would be temporary easements. There was a discussion about additional parking requested by the applicant. Mr. Kleppin continued with an explanation of the different phases of the project. There was a discussion about the density and how these buildings near the train station will be in high demand.

Although she was not in attendance, there was an issue from Ms. DiMeglio about the memo that was sent to the Planning Commission. Ms. Casey said that it was the same memo that has been sent to the Public Works Committee which included the term of the agreement, indemnification and insurance. The memo had seemed to be in simple terms but Ms. Casey said that was not the intention. It had been written with the intention of being transparent.

Ms. Casey said that the permanent easement would be more complicated. This request was not as complicated. There was a discussion about the compensation for the easement. Atty Callahan noted who was doing the appraisal for the city which was paid for by the developer. The temporary right of access would be for 6 months. There was a discussion about the use of the property for staging. The city's property abuts this property.

Ms. King read the resolution into the record.

***** MR. MUSHAK MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning Commission that the 8-24 referral made by the City's Economic and Community Development Office for Mayor Rilling to enter into a Temporary Right of Access and Entry Agreement over 30 Monroe Street be **APPROVED** subject to the following reasons:

1. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to "*Improve and maintain Norwalk's attractiveness as a business location and as a place to live for employees*" (Chapter 3: Prosperity & Opportunity, pg. 54); and
2. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development action to "*Continue implementation of transit-oriented development (TOD) and a range of mixed-use opportunities for sustainable live/work/play communities in the city*" (Chapter 3: Prosperity & Opportunity, pg. 57); and
3. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to "*Continue to encourage the development of vibrant transit-oriented districts within walking distance of the South Norwalk, East Norwalk, and Merritt 7 train stations. Housing near transit is important for Norwalk's economic development and revitalization goals*" (Chapter 4: Housing Choice & Healthy Lifestyles, pg. 76); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that notice of this action be forwarded to the Common Council.

Mr. Baxendale seconded.

Nora King; Mary Peniston; Steven Ferguson; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak; Tammy Langalis approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

Ms. Casey thanked the commissioners for passing this project, saying it would be good for the city.

IV. DISCUSSION OF OTHER ITEMS

A. Update on Norwalk River Valley Trail from Mike Yeosock - Mr. Yeosock noted that a lease agreement had been approved several months prior. The Phase 1 survey has been completed and said it was low risk. The work is being done above ground and not much excavation. Corporation Counsel wanted the commissioners to be aware of the survey results. There was a discussion about trucks in the area which are parked on Riverside Drive. The commissioners did not have any other questions about this.

B. East Norwalk TOD plan update

Mr. Baxendale said that there is one more meeting before the public's input is required. Mr. Kleppin said that the last meeting of the committee would be on May 18 before it was back to the Planning Commission in June.

C. Industrial Zones Study update

Mr. Kleppin noted that a consultant had been picked. The contract had to be approved. He said that the study should take 1 year.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 21, 2020

***** MS. PENISTON MOVED** to accept the **April 21, 2020** Planning Commission minutes with one clarification.

Mr. Ferguson seconded.

Nora King; Mary Peniston; Steven Ferguson; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak;

Tammy Langalis approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

VI. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

There were no comments from Mr. Kleppin.

VII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Ferguson asked for an update of the POKO project. Mr. Kleppin said there was nothing new to report. Corporation Counsel has been speaking with them.

There was also a discussion about movie theaters and the mall. Ms. Casey, who was still on the Zoom call, said that she had spoken with the mall which mentioned that they had a re-

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open plan. There would be meeting the following day. They have outlets around the country so that they have been studying them. She also noted that there had been working with the Zoning Department about re-opening restaurants and what that would look like. They have spoken with restaurants to see how they can help them. There was a suggestion to close some roads to allow restaurants to use those areas especially Washington Street. There would be coordination needed from the cityside. There was a discussion about the restaurant that is on the main level of the mall and how to help the mall.

The commissioners sent their best wishes to Fran DiMeglio.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Peniston made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Ferguson seconded.

**Nora King; Mary Peniston; Steven Ferguson; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak;
Tammy Langalis approved.**

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero