

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
July 7, 2022**

PRESENT: Louis Schulman, Chair; Mike Mushak; Nick Kantor; Tammy Langalis; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Steve Ferguson; Hector Pachas; Galen Wells (arrived after the roll call); Darius Williams (left at 6:30 pm); Richard Roina (arrived at 6:50 pm)

STAFF: Steve Kleppin; Bryan Baker

OTHERS: Don Conlon; Wayne D’Vanzo; Lt. Terrence Blake; Atty Adam Blank; Atty Liz Suchy; Atty Wiliam Hennessey; Steve Leaty; Kevin Marin; Tim Onderko; John Plante; Atty Jay Klein; Ginny _____; Ben Hanpeter; Diane Lauricella;

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schulman called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with all participants calling in, separately.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kleppin called the roll.

III. REVIEW & ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

a. #2022-05 SP – Merritt Station Norwalk LLC/129 Glover Avenue LLC/135 Glover Avenue LLC/156 Glover Avenue LLC/201 Glover Avenue LLC/Building & Land Technology – North 7 (67, 69, 79, 87, 111, 117, 129, 135, 155, 156 and 201 Glover Avenue and 2 Oakwood Avenue) – Special permit application for an Executive Office Development Park which includes approximately 1,300 dwelling units and +/- 50,000sf of retail within seven (7) buildings ranging from five (5) to fifteen (15) stories – Report & recommended action

Mr. Schulman began by asking for a motion by one of the commissioners. At this point, Mr. Kantor made a motion to approve which Mr. Ferguson seconded. He then asked to review each condition before proceeding to a vote on the resolution. He noted that all the alternate commissioners could vote on this matter since two of the commissioners were unable to attend the meeting.

There was a discussion on conditions #2 and #3 regarding the Certificate of Zoning Compliance for Phase 2 and Phase 3 in connection with the competition of improvements by CT Department of Transportation for Glovere Avenue, Grist Mill Road, Route 7 Interchange, Main Avenue and other associated improvements. There was a discussion about whether this

language was acceptable to the applicant. Both of these were acceptable. There was a discussion about revising the language; however most commissioners did not want to change it.

There was then a discussion about condition #7 regarding the design standards. Mr. Schulman noted that the applicant would not agree to a change to language that would be retroactive. Their financing model was based upon the city's Master Plan as approved as of this date.

There was then a discussion about condition #11 regarding the town square. Mr. Schulman thought that it had been proposed as larger. However, Mr. Kleppin said that it had been proposed at 10,000 sq. ft. There was also a discussion about conditions #16 and #18.

There was then a discussion about condition #25 and revising the language for the traffic study. Mr. Kleppin said he would make the change to the language.

There was also a discussion about condition #27. It was noted that if the applicant received approvals from the state for a sidewalk that connects Glover Avenue and Main Avenue, and then could not obtain a grant, they were still obligated to complete the construction. It should be done in Phase 1. There was also a discussion about the length of time it should take to complete. Mr. Kleppin would check with TMP for that information. He would revise this condition with it. He said that he would forward the approval, if they were to approve at this meeting, to Conn DOT so they know that this had been completed.

There was then a discussion about condition #31.

The commissioners then discussed the design standards including building massing. Shorter buildings could be affected by the standards. The next item was about the amount of roof space to be used for solar panels. The applicant wanted a minimum of 15% but the Planning & Zoning staff made some recommendations to the commissioners. There was some discussion about the different options. It was recommended to increase the amount of roof space dedicated to solar panels to 20%.

Mr. Schulman asked if the commissioners were ready to vote on this matter.

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission began discussing the project with the applicant in May, 2020;

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments to the Building Zone map and Building Zone regulations were formally referred to WESTCOG and the Town of Wilton on April 22, 2022:

- **WHEREAS**, WESTCOG expressed concern that the parking standards should be in line with recommendations within Public Act 21-29 given this is a TOD development in

proximity to a train station and the NRV and that environmental impacts to the Norwalk and Long Island Sound should be minimized by reducing impervious surface.

- **WHEREAS**, the Town of Wilton provided a written response expressing concern and recommendations related to project scope, traffic and building size.

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission “the Commission” conducted a public hearing on the proposed applications on June 2, 2022, at which time verbal testimony was received;

WHEREAS, the Commission allowed written communications from the public to be received until June 15, 2022;

WHEREAS, the applicant was given an opportunity to respond to the written comments at the Commission’s meeting of June 15, 2022;

WHEREAS, the Commission acknowledges that traffic is already a significant concern in the area;

WHEREAS, the Commission hired an outside peer review consultant to assist them with their analysis of impacts on existing and future traffic;

WHEREAS, the City has consulted with the CT Department of Transportation regarding scheduling and status of several infrastructure projects that will impact the area;

WHEREAS, the Commission has determined that the Master Plan, if approved, should be approved in three phases, based on specific infrastructure improvements;

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that there is sufficient capacity within the Wastewater Treatment Plant to accommodate this development and other development presently under consideration by the Commission;

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that there is adequate public water available and that water usage has declined through more efficient fixture and the upgrade and replacement of old and leaky infrastructure and that water usage, as determined by the utilities is forecast to decline in their latest forecasts;

WHEREAS, the Commission considered all testimony received and closed the hearing on June 15, 2022;

WHEREAS, the City recognizes the value and importance of the Merritt/7 office towers to the City and that it is the highest concentration of Class A office space in the City and contains numerous significant and important tenants, not only to Norwalk but also for the State of Connecticut;

WHEREAS, the Commission has determined that the proposed Master Plan are consistent with the recommendations with the 2019 Citywide Plan, specifically:

Ch. 3, Goal 3, Strategy A, Action Vi recommends “Continue implementation of transit-oriented development (TOD) and a range of mixed-use opportunities for sustainable

live/work/play communities in the city. This includes approving TOD project(s) in East Norwalk, implementing the pedestrian bridge and **Merritt 7** station project, and TOD projects in SoNo, and mixed-use clusters along commercial arterials”

Ch. 4, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action ii recommends “As part of a rewrite of the zoning code, establish transition design standards for commercial and mixed-use areas in corridors on the edges of traditional single-family neighborhoods”

Ch. 4, Goal 1, Strategy C, Action i recommends “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. At the same time, the city should monitor housing markets and support these districts with urban design and programming initiatives”

Ch. 4, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action ii recommends “Continue to meet or exceed the state’s 10% goal for affordable housing”

Ch.4, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action iii recommends “Continue the inclusionary zoning program”

Ch. 4, Goal 2, Strategy A, Action iii recommends “Support improvements and design standards that encourage walking and biking access to city and neighborhood destinations, such as village retail areas, parks, and schools”

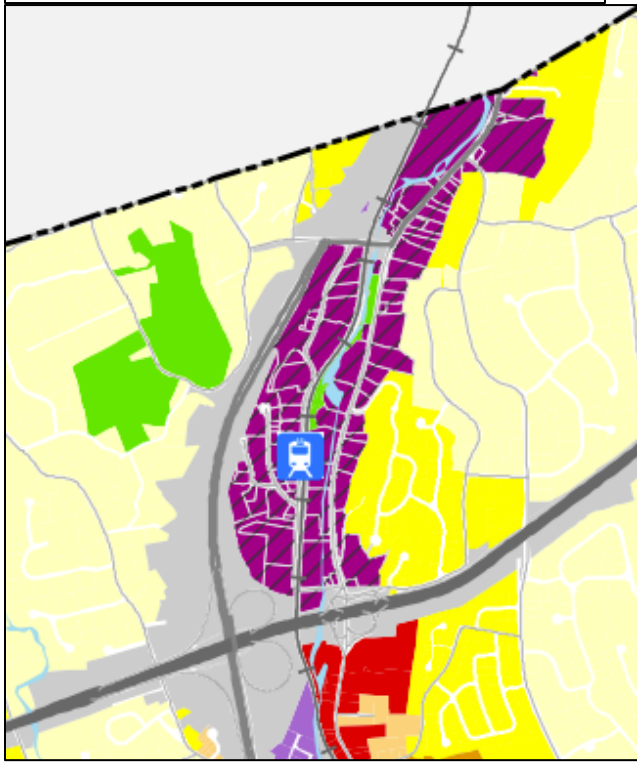
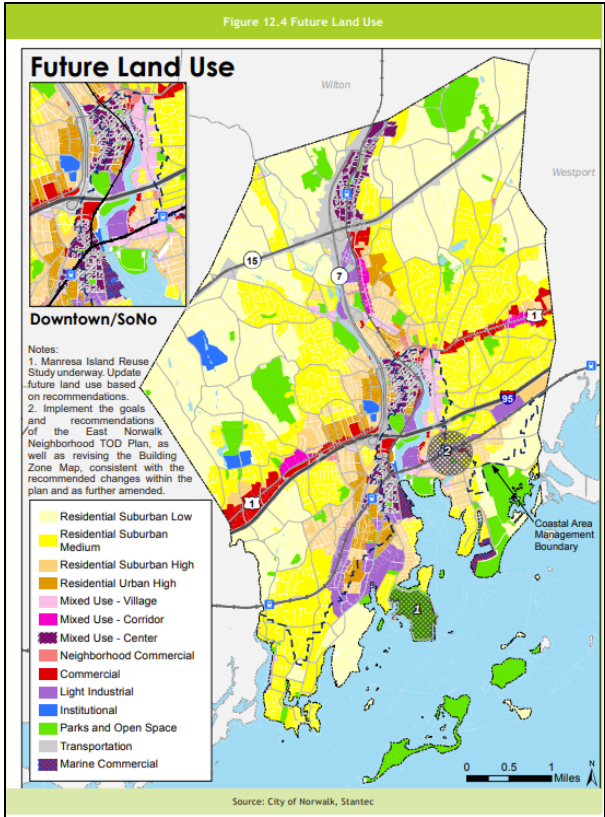
Ch. 10, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action i recommends “Make land use decisions that support walking, bicycling, and public transit use. Incorporate multimodal considerations into comprehensive land use policies to guide decision-making”

Ch. 10, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action iii recommends “Encourage pedestrian-friendly design features in street improvement projects. Features include sidewalks with adequate width, street trees, pedestrian scale lighting, clearly marked crosswalks, on-street parking with corner bulb-outs to reduce crossing distances, bollards, public spaces, gardens, outdoor furniture, art, and interesting architectural details”

Ch. 10, Goal 2, Strategy A, Action i recommends “Right-size parking requirements and parking ratios for non-residential and multifamily land uses”

Ch. 12, Figure 12.4 Future Land Use Map – area proposed for “Mixed Use Center”

- Medium- to high-density office, residential, retail, hotel, and entertainment areas that create vibrant 18-hour, 7-day-a-week live-work-play-learn environments. Small scale boutique manufacturing, clean tech, and artisan space are also allowed uses provided they meet performance and design standards.
- Accessible by transit (bus and train) as well as by pedestrians and bicyclists. Walkability improvements should be integral to all development proposals.
- Wall Street/West Avenue, South Norwalk, and **Merritt 7**, and at a smaller scale, the East Norwalk TOD district to be delineated through a planning study in 2019.



Ch. 12, Goal 1, Strategy A, Action i recommends “Direct future development to Norwalk’s urban core, village districts, and corridors through redevelopment and infill. Promote walkable mixed-use development in the established Wall St/West Ave, SoNo, and **Merritt 7** areas, in the future East Norwalk TOD area, and in key activity centers along the Route 1 and Main Avenue/Main Street commercial corridors. Promote transit-oriented development (TOD) near rail stations and high-frequency bus stops, emphasizing walkability and transit-supportive densities and uses”

Ch. 12, Goal 2, Strategy A, Action iii recommends “Improve the public realm within village districts and activity centers with design standards for sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian lighting, bicycle racks, seating, signage and public art”

Ch. 12, Goal 2, Strategy B, Action ii recommends “As part of the zoning code rewrite, create zoning with design standards to achieve desired outcomes for commercial and mixed-use projects as redevelopment occurs”

Ch. 12, Goal 2, Strategy B, Action iv recommends “Study commercial corridors to identify priority activity centers for mixed-use zoning and clustered redevelopment”

WHEREAS, the Commission unanimously approved the amendments to the Building Zone Map and Building Zone Regulation at their June 15, 2022 meeting.

**** MR. KANTOR MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission, that **#2022-5 -R-M-SP**, specific to the Special Permit Application, including the accompanying Master Plan and North 7 Design Standards as proposed by Merritt Station Norwalk LLC/129 Glover Avenue LLC/135 Glover Avenue LLC/156 Glover Avenue LLC/201 Glover Avenue LLC/Building & Land Technology – North 7, for the properties consisting of (67, 69, 79, 87, 111, 117, 129, 135, 155, 156 and 201 Glover Avenue and 2 Oakwood Avenue) to rezone to Executive Office Zone, be approved, subject to the following conditions;

1. The Master Plan is approved in three phases:
 - a. Phase 1: Building 1.1, Building 1.2, Building 2.1 and the “Town Square”, including all streetscape improvements associated with the sections of Glover Avenue, terminating just north of Building 2.1, as indicated on the Master Plan, Compilation Plan.
 - b. Phase 2: Buildings 2.3 and 2.3, including all streetscape improvements associated with the sections of Glover Avenue, terminating just north of Building 2.3, as indicated on the “Master Plan, Compilation Plan”.
 - c. Phase 3: Buildings 3.1 and 3.2, including Raccoon Park and the “Alternate Walking Trail”, as well as all remaining streetscape improvements along Glover Avenue as indicated on the Master Plan, Compilation Plan.
2. The Certificate of Zoning Compliance for Phase 2 of the Master Plan shall not be obtained, and no units occupied in this phase, until all the improvements proposed by the CT Department of Transportation for the Merritt Parkway, Route 7 interchanges,

including the replacement of the Glover Avenue Bridge and all associated improvements have been completed.

The Certificate of Zoning Compliance for Phase 3 of the Master Plan shall not be obtained, and no units occupied in this phase, until all the improvements required by the CT Department of Transportation to the Glover Avenue, Grist Mill Road, Route 7 interchange, including improvements to Main Avenue, north of Grist Mill Road, and all other associated improvements have been completed.

3. The final Master Plan shall be revised to indicate the location of each Node of Activity proposed along Glover Avenue, as presented by the applicant in their presentation at the 6.2.22 public hearing.
4. Prior to submitting a Site Plan application, the applicant shall file any necessary consolidation maps for that phase of the project.
5. Within one (1) year from the effective date of this approval and prior to filing of any Site Plan Application for Phase 1 of the Master Plan, the Special Permit Resolution, for the Development Park Master Plan, including the Master Plan map and associated Master Plan documents shall be filed with the Town Clerk for recording and filing on the land records of the City of Norwalk.
6. The number of stories proposed for each building shall not exceed the number of stories indicated on the Master Plan, Compilation Plan, unless otherwise authorized within the North 7 Design Standards, dated July 7, 2022. Any proposed deviation requires an amendment to the Master Plan.
7. All building designs shall be consistent with the North 7 Design Standards, dated July 7, 2022 and are subject to outside peer review.
8. All streetscape improvements shall be consistent with the North 7 Design Standards, dated July 7, 2022 and are subject to outside peer review.
9. Final design and layout of the proposed "Town Square" to be included with the Landscape Plan, that shall be submitted as part of the first phase Site Plan application.
10. The "Town Square" shall be a minimum of 10,000 contiguous square feet.
11. The "Town Square" shall include tree cover as well as shaded seating areas and be built with pavers or other semi-pervious materials.
12. Prior to submitting the Site Plan application for the first phase of the project, the applicant shall meet with the representatives from #8 and #12 Oakwood Avenue regarding obtaining an easement for the purpose of providing a public access trail through either property connecting Oakwood Avenue to Glover Avenue, as shown on the Master Plan Compilation Plan, dated 2.28.22.
13. If one or both of the property owners agree to allow the public access trail on their property, the trail must be completed prior to obtaining the Certificate of Zoning Compliance for Building 2.1.
14. The landscape plans accompanying each Site Plan application shall indicate the location and type of Node of Activity proposed along Glover Avenue, as presented by the applicant in their presentation at the 5.2.22 public hearing.

15. As part of the Site Plan application for the third phase of the project, a landscape plan shall be submitted for the proposed park, "Raccoon Park". The plan shall include the removal of all invasive species and all plantings shall be native species.
16. The applicant shall construct the "Alternate Walking Trail" as shown on the Master Plan, Compilation Plan, dated 2.28.22. The trail shall be ADA compliant, unless topographically impossible, and constructed of previous materials.
17. The proposed park, "Raccoon Park," shall be constructed prior to the Certificate of Occupancy of the third phase of the project.
18. The park shall be a minimum of two acres and shall be constructed as large as possible, pending the building locations for the third phase of the project and road improvements required to approval of the third phase of the master plan.
19. Parking structure facades shall match the building facades, as indicated in the North 7 Design Standards, dated July 7, 2022.
20. All proposed and existing streetlights shall be ornamental posts and fixtures, as approved by the Department of Public Works. Existing "cobra-head" lights shall be removed and replaced with additional ornamental lights as directed by the Department of Public Works.
21. Ground floor commercial spaces shall have a minimum ceiling height of twelve (12) feet.
22. The applicant and any subsequent owners shall ensure that the "Town Square" is programmed with events that are open to the public and maintains an active presence.
23. Each development submitted as part of each phase of the project, are subject to North 7 Design Standards, dated July 7, 2022 and are subject to outside architectural peer review.
24. Each development submitted as part of each phase of the project, shall also be subject to outside traffic peer review.
25. Prior to the submission of Phase 1, the applicant shall submit an application to the CT Department of Transportation to install an approximately 6' wide sidewalk along the southern portion of Grist Mill Road from Glover Avenue to Main Avenue, plus all associated improvements, including but not limited to, storm drain modifications, guide rail removal and replacement, installation of concrete ADA compliant curb ramps, traffic signal upgrades to install crosswalks across all approaches to the intersection of Main Avenue and Grist Mill Road, connecting to existing sidewalks where feasible, pavement markings and roadway restriping, traffic control, etc. Final design and specifications to be approved by Norwalk Department of Public Works, Transportation, Mobility & Parking and the CT Department of Transportation. Should the CT Department of Transportation approve the project, the improvements shall be completed within two (2) years from the date of said approval.
26. Building 2.1 shall be reconfigured to flip the building so that the mass of the building is closer to Glover Avenue.

27. Upon Site Plan application submittal, each building design shall emphasize compliance with the “Building Massing” requirements of the North 7 Design Standards, dated July 7, 2022, to realize the intent of that provision.
28. Any deviations from or modifications to the Master Plan shall be approved by the Commission and may be subject to additional public hearing(s).
29. Should any building façade material become damaged or deteriorated, the applicant and future owners shall repair the damage or deterioration within thirty (30) days’ notice from the City

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this action shall be July 15, 2022.

Mr. Ferguson seconded.

Louis Schulman; Mike Mushak; Nick Kantor; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Steve Ferguson; Hector Pachas; Galen Wells approved.

No one opposed.

Tammy Langalis abstained.

b. #2022-27 CAM – William & Gillian Graves – 52 Sammis Street – Construction of new single-family residence – Report & recommended action

Don Conlon, the architect on the project, began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property. He described the proposed project which would demolish the current house and included a proposed pool with the construction of a new home. The new building would be larger than the current one. There would be a new drainage system which would be better than the current one. They have received the applicable approvals from the necessary departments, although they are waiting for one. He discussed the comments from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (“DEEP”).

Mr. Schulman asked for the vegetative buffer behind the house be enhanced and made a condition of the approval. There was a review of the rendering of the proposed house. There was also a discussion about the addition of sidewalks. Mr. Kleppin did not know if the commission had the authority to regulate whether a sidewalk should be constructed. There was also a discussion about the placement of the propane tank and storm water retention. At this point, Mr. Kleppin said he could work with the engineer on this point. Wayne D’Vanzo did not think it would be a practical location. Then there was a discussion about the addition of a sidewalk which would be added to city property. Mr. Mushak said he thought they should require a sidewalk. Mr. Conlon said he would have to check with his client, because he had never had this request before. There was a concern about how this would affect the width of the road, but Mr. Mushak said that it would be set back. There was a further discussion about the storm retention system in a large storm.

**** MR. PACHAS MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that application #2022-27 CAM – William & Gillian Graves – 52 Sammis Street – Demolish existing single family and reconstruct new single-family residence be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. That the building and site will be developed in accordance with the following plans:
 - a. Per Zoning Location Survey dated 5/17/2022 revised to 5/25/2022 prepared by Arcamone Land Surveyor, LLC Norwalk, CT
 - b. Per architectural plans dated 6/4/2022 prepared by Daniel Conlon Architects, Wilton, CT
 - c. Per engineering plans dated 4/25/2022 prepared by Fairfield County Engineering LLC, Norwalk, CT
2. That all department sign-offs are obtained prior to issuance of any Zoning Permit; and
3. That all City storm-water management requirements are met; and
4. That a permit is obtained from the Department of Public Works regarding City storm-water management requirements; and
5. That all required soil sedimentation and erosion controls are in place prior to the start of any construction; and
6. That any additional needed soil sedimentation and erosion controls be installed at the direction of the Staff; and
7. That any modifications to the approved plan be reviewed and approved by City Staff prior to implementing; and
8. That any and all HVAC units shall be located in conformance with the applicable zoning setbacks and have flood certifications; and
9. That any proposed on-grade flood and erosion controls, including seawalls, be subjected to City review and DEEP approval; and
10. That flood certifications be submitted prior to issuance of a zoning permit by a CT licensed engineer or architect for the main dwelling structure and any accessory structures; and
11. That the applicant assesses the vitality of the rear vegetation to south abutting tidal waters by wetland scientist then implement and restore a vegetated buffer with native plants species and mitigate non-native if present, plan to be submitted to planning and zoning staff for approval prior to zoning permit; and
12. That the applicant considers relocation of stormwater retention system to the north (front of structure) of the property to reduce impacts to coastal resources; and
13. That the applicant install a 48" paved sidewalk that meets the city code; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this proposal complies with Section 118-1110 and all applicable coastal resource and use policies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this approval shall be July 15th, 2022. You must obtain a zoning approval and a building permit prior to any work on the site. A building permit must be obtained within one year of the effective date or this CAM approval automatically becomes null and void.

Mr. Ferguson seconded.

Louis Schulman; Mike Mushak; Nick Kantor; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Steve Ferguson; Hector Pachas; Galen Well; Tammy Langalis approved.

No one opposed.

Richard Roina abstained.

c. #2022-33 R – Norwalk Police Department – Building zone regulation text amendment to Article 80 to allow for EMS communication antennas to be installed on existing public utility towers – Preliminary review

Lt. Terrence Blake explained the capital project. This is the second part of the project. It encompasses several departments. They are ending the planning phase and are starting the construction phase. He explained why the antennas should be installed at this point in the city. There is another antenna in Wilton and at Norwalk Hospital. It would sit on top of a water tower. There was a discussion if this application was not approved. Lt. Blake said that there was not an antenna of this height in the area. They might have to build a full antenna which would cost the city more. He did not see an issue for the tower falling. The antenna addresses safety issues for residents trying to get in touch with emergency services.

There was then a discussion about when this application would be on the Planning & Zoning Commission's agenda. Mr. Kleppin said that it would be at their first August meeting. All the commissioners agreed.

**** MR. ROINA MOVED: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that modification to Site Plan Review application #2021-06SPR – G & T Norwalk LLC – 93 Winfield Street – Modification to SPR for change in exterior design be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. That the buildings remain per existing conditions photos provided by the applicant (see pages 6-8 of the request of modification letter.) provided that all proposed trees on site are a minimum of 25% larger than previously proposed and that any dead trees be replaced; and
2. That the original conditions of approval remain in effect; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this action July 15th, 2022.

Mr. Ferguson seconded.

Louis Schulman; Mike Mushak; Nick Kantor; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Steve Ferguson; Hector Pachas; Galen Well; Tammy Langalis; Richard Roina approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

d. 2021-06 SPR – G & T Norwalk LLC – 93 Winfield Street – Modification to SPR for change in exterior design – Report & Recommend Action

Atty Adam Blank, the attorney for the applicant, began the presentation with an introduction of the team. He then showed the commissioners part of the approved plans which included vinyl siding. He noted that the renderings showed color on them but had not been set forth in the application. He also noted that the project was being upgraded to a condominium. They are using more expensive siding than previously set forth in their application. He hoped the commissioners would deem this a minor change; however, they needed the COZC before they could close on some of the units that have been sold. He also noted that there is no architectural review on these types of applications.

There was a discussion about the design of the buildings which would include horizontal siding. There were concerns about the landscape design. Ms. Langalis said she was happy that these were condominiums and was happy with the revised siding. There was a suggestion by Mr. Mushak about making the perimeter trees larger to help soften the buildings and the applicant agreed to that.

**** MS. WELLS MOVED: THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that modification to Site Plan Review application #2021-06SPR – G & T Norwalk LLC – 93 Winfield Street – Modification to SPR for change in exterior design be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. That the buildings remain per existing conditions photos provided by the applicant (see pages 6-8 of the request of modification letter.)
2. That the original conditions of approval remain in effect; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this action July 15th, 2022.

Ms. Jordan-Byron seconded.

Louis Schulman; Richard Roina; Brian Baxendale; Hector Pachas; Mike Mushak; Nick Kantor; Tammy Langalis; Galen Wells; Jacquen Jordan-Byron approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

It was noted that if the East Norwalk TOD had happened on its original schedule, this application may not have passed.

e. #2022-31 R/SP/CAM – BPC Capital Management I, LLC – 3 Park Street – Building zone regulation text amendment to Article 50 to reduce the minimum lot size for historic preservation developments in conjunction with a proposed 11-unit historic preservation development – Preliminary review

Atty Liz Suchy began the presentation by introducing the project team. She then showed them the architect's rendering. She noted that it was listed in the city's register as well as the National Registry of Historic Places. She has submitted 3 letters of support. She then described the property as well as the proposed buildings. There would be two new buildings which would be complementary to the current building. She noted that they had received some approvals but had not received all. She also noted that she fully expected a public hearing for this application.

There was a discussion about some trees which Atty Suchy said they would be keeping. She also noted that this proposal would be sensitive to the neighborhood.

At this point, there was a 10 minute recess at 8:02 pm before the start of the public hearing for Wegmans.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. #2022-19 R/SP/SPR - Wegmans Food Markets, Inc. – 47 Richards Avenue and 677, 667 and 651 Connecticut Avenue – Zoning text amendment, special permit and site plan review applications for a Wegmans grocery store, parking structure and two additional retail buildings

Mr. Schulman opened the public hearing and noted that they would not have all of the information at this meeting. There was a discussion about whether the public would comment or not at this meeting. Mr. Baker advised that since there were members of the public in attendance that there should be. Mr. Schulman then discussed the procedures of the public hearing. He noted that not all of the traffic study was available at this time.

Atty William Hennessey, the attorney for the applicant, began the presentation by noting that the surrounding property owners had received notice of the public hearing. The requirements had been provided to the Planning and Zoning Department staff. He then introduced the project team. He then gave a brief background as to the site and what is currently on the site. He described the MBI property including the main entrance, as well as the 3 other properties nearby. There would be multiple points of access around the property. He also discussed the offsite wetlands.

Steve Leaty gave a brief history of the founding of Wegman's which is family owned and privately held. There are 107 stores throughout the United States. He explained the corporate structure. He explained how Wegman's would get involved in local communities and their giving priorities. These included being involved with the United Way, scholarships to employees, and building cultures of diversity. Another way they help their communities is working with local, organic farms. They also have a huge organic farm near their headquarters. They are committed to reducing their carbon footprint. There was a discussion about adding solar panels to the parking garage.

Kevin Marin continued the presentation about sustainable building design and how they would help the environment. He said they are adding LED lighting to all of their stores. They maintained all of their equipment. They worked to make sure stores were near transportation hubs as well.

Tim Onderko continued the presentation by discussing driveways. One of them, onto Richards Avenue, existed today and would be widened. There would be a new sidewalk. The driveway would go to the back of the store. He described the next parcel and a reduction in impervious surfaces. He then described the other parcels and their driveways. He also discussed the number of parking spaces along with a comparison to the Walmart across the street. He discussed the storm water drainage system. They also would be reviewed by the state. He also briefly described the landscape plan.

John Plante, the traffic engineer, continued the presentation with a discussion of the traffic and the access points. He gave an overview of how they will provide the access to make it work for the customers and the community.

Mr. Leaty said they would create a safe space for customers to walk around. He then showed them the elevations. Mr. Marin further described the architecture. Atty Hennessey said that the text amendment would allow the cupola, which was a signature on other Wegmans. There was a description of the parking garages. There was a description of the first floor of the inside of the store as well as the cafe which was on an upper floor. Mr. Leaty showed them the elevations for the parking garage.

Atty Jay Klein continued the presentation with the text amendment. He noted that the B1 Zone prohibited a parking structure being right on the street. He also noted that the proposed parking structure is a setback on the property.

Mr. Onderko explained that one of the trees on the property could be saved but the other could not. He noted that he would have a definitive answer by next month.

There was also a discussion about the solar panels on the parking garage. They had looked at local places to see how they were done. They noted that it would be difficult to put solar panels on the roofs because of the snow in New England. They also had a lot of mechanicals on the roof. They would look into buying from solar farms. Mr. Schulman asked him to look at the other buildings on the property that they would be constructing and discussing it with the Planning and Zoning Department staff.

There was a discussion about EV stations on the property. Mr. Leaty said that they had between 2-4 EV stations at each of their stores. There was a concern that those spots would take up parking spaces to be used by those without electric vehicles. There was also a discussion about the sidewalks and pedestrian connectivity. He didn't think that the sidewalk on both sides would be safe. They would work with staff for a solution.

At this point, the public hearing was opened to the public for comments.

Ginny _____, 7 Noland Avenue, had concerns about the traffic in the area, although she was happy about the idea of a Wegmans. She also thought that the timing of the public hearing did not allow many residents to participate.

Ben Hanpeter, East Avenue, spoke in opposition to the project. He thought that it was already a congested area. He said there was a proliferation of supermarkets in this area, while in some areas there is no supermarket.

Diane Lauricella, 304 Main Avenue, Unit 357, asked whether the public hearing would be left open. Mr. Schulman said that it would be for additional information, especially the peer review. She spoke in opposition to the application. She asked what percentage of Wegman's customers would be from out of Norwalk and what percentage would be from Norwalk. She asked about the potential for local jobs. She said she would like to see solar panels, if this application was approved. She also had criticisms of the traffic study.

At this point, Atty Hennessey addressed some of the comments from the public. Mr. Plante also addressed some of the concerns about the traffic study. He noted that this site was more ideal than through neighborhoods like South Norwalk. He didn't think that going through a residential neighborhood would make sense.

Mr. Onderko mentioned the improvements that would be completed with this project. There was a discussion about the impervious surfaces now and what it would be after the Wegman's parcel would be built. Mr. Leaty gave further explanations about bike racks and connectivity.

There was a discussion about comparing Wegman's to the other supermarkets in the area. Mr. Leaty said that their top priority is customer service. There was also a discussion about why Norwalk was picked for the Wegman's but Mr. Leaty said he would have to find out more information about that.

Atty Hennessey asked if they could close the public hearing after the next session. He also asked if the commissioners could submit questions to the staff for the applicant so that they could be prepared for the next session.

Mr. Schulman said they would wait for the information from the peer review of the traffic study. They tentatively scheduled the next session for August 4. Atty Hennessey did note that he would be on vacation that date. He asked if they could continue to July 20 in order to select a date.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 28, 2022

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**** MS. LANGALIS MOVED to approve the June 28, 2022 meeting minutes.**

Mr. Mushak seconded.

Louis Schulman; Mike Mushak; Nick Kantor; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Steve Ferguson; Hector Pachas; Galen Well; Tammy Langalis; Richard Roina approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

VI. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR

Because of the late hour, Mr. Kleppin said that he had no comments.

VII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Mushak said there has been a tree ordinance since last October but only for public properties.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Mushak made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Pachas seconded.

Louis Schulman; Mike Mushak; Nick Kantor; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Steve Ferguson; Hector Pachas; Galen Well; Tammy Langalis; Richard Roina approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero