

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMISSION
October 13, 2015**

PRESENT: Torgny Astrom, Chair; Fran DiMeglio; Victor Cavallo; Joel Zaremby; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; David Davidson; William Dunne

STAFF: Michael Greene; Frank Strauch

OTHERS: Atty John Jay Ryan; Wayne D'Avanzo; Sonya Trawlson; Lynn Massey, David Katz, Valerie Horne, John Massey, Kim Nielsen; Kate Hill, Phyllis P Hauenstein

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Astrom called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Greene called the roll.

III. REPORT OF LAND USE COMMITTEE, Fran DiMeglio, Chair Referrals – Report & recommendation

- a) **8-24 Review – Request to review the proposed conveyance of easements by the City of Norwalk to Norwalk Land Development, LLC (General Growth Properties, Inc.)**

**** MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED: BE IT RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning Commission that the 8-24 Review the proposed conveyance of easements by the City of Norwalk to Norwalk Land Development, LLC (General Growth Properties, Inc.) be **APPROVED**, and that the Commission finds that the proposed 8-24 request is consistent with the Plan of Conservation & Development for Norwalk and that the reasons for this action are:

1. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Seek private investment within the community.” (A.1.1.1. p. 10); and
2. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Encourage diversity in commerce and industry.” (A.1.1.2. p. 10); and
3. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Protect property values.” (A.1.1.5. p. 10); and
4. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Encourage diverse job opportunities for various employment sectors within Norwalk.” (A.1.2.4.

- p. 10); and
5. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Support tax incentives, grants and state and federal programs, such as the Connecticut Enterprise Zone Act, which encourage investment in Norwalk.” (A.1.2.8. p. 10); and
 6. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Encourage business community sponsorship of activities and improvements.” (A.1.2.10. p. 10); and
 7. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Encourage retail activity in the West Avenue/Wall Street and Reed Putnam areas and place emphasis on pedestrian-oriented environment.” (A.4.1.1. p. 12); and
 8. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Encourage subsequent retail and service sector growth along Routes 1 and 7 where the infrastructure system can adequately support development; place emphasis on pedestrian-oriented environment. (A.4.1.2. p. 13); and
 9. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Maintain diversity in the SoNo retail mix.” (A.4.1.5. p. 13); and
 10. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Modify plans for Reed-Putnam Parcels 1, 2, and 4 as amended” (A.6.1.1. p. 13); and
 11. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Incorporate squares, plazas, and greens into redevelopment and areas of new residential growth.” (C.1.3.10. p. 24); and
 12. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Expand retail mix in SoNo.” (D.5.3.1. p. 32); and
 13. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Encourage retail/cultural development within the Reed-Putnam Design District and at the South Norwalk Intermodal Pulse Point to create a critical mass of activity with the Maritime Aquarium and the Washington Street Historic District.” (D.7.1.4. p. 33); and
 14. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Create an engaging urban landscape and architectural setting in the West Avenue area through the adoption and implementation of West Avenue planning, as amended.” (F.4.1.10. p. 44); and
 15. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Enhance pedestrian experience to support related economic revitalization and encourage transit use.” (F.4.2.1. p. 44); and
 16. To implement the Plan of Conservation and Development goal to “Upgrade sidewalks along major roads.” (F.4.2.3. p. 44); and

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

Mr. McLaughlin seconded.

Torgny Astrom, Chair; Fran DiMeglio; Victor Cavallo; Joel Zaremby; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne voted in favor. David Davidson opposed. No one abstained.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING

a) Subdivision # 3637 – 35 Meeker Court, LLC – 35 Meeker Court – 4 Lots – Final review before public hearing (Postponed until October 13th)

Before Mr. Astrom opened the public hearing, he summarized the procedure of the public hearing for the public.

Atty Ryan began the presentation by reminding the commissioners that they had seen a similar application for this property several years ago. Now it has been re-done after being made aware of the issues from the previous application which he discussed.

Wayne D'Avanzo, of Fairfield County Engineering, continued the presentation. He explained that they minimized the number of curb cuts, and explained the driveways. He then explained the retaining walls and the soil testing. He discussed how they designed the drainage for a 25 year storm. They tried to preserve as many trees as they could. They are requesting a waiver of sidewalks on Meeker Court. They would also be installing new street trees. He next explained about the grading which would be more slopes and fewer walls. He said that the application conformed to the regulations.

Sonya Trawlson, 34 Meeker Court, asked about how the retention system would work since there were no storm drains on the street? She also asked if there would be any blasting.

Lynn Massey, 36 Meeker Court, said that they get a lot of water now. She asked if there would be more water. She also questioned about one of the driveways which she thought was on her property line. She also asked for clarification of why there was so much driveway on one of the lots.

David Katz, 28 Briar Street, had questions about the house on Briar Street. He also asked whether the driveway would be widened. He then asked about the height of the retaining wall on the north. He had several other questions about the slopes on the lots, setbacks for driveways and why an existing driveway couldn't be used instead of creating a new one, among others.

Valerie Horne, 20 Meeker Court, had questions about the driveways.

John Massey also spoke about the driveways. He thought that they should keep the driveway that was there because another would be invasive to the forest system that is there. He asked whether they could a waiver on the regulation that stated there

could only be 2 houses on a driveway. He thought that by having 3 on the one driveway it would be better for the environment.

Kim Nielsen, 32 Briar Street, had questions about whether if they were sharing the driveway, it would be widened. If it was widened, would it be repaved? There were concerns about the drainage system and the potential of mud. He also asked about the length of the project and was concerned about blasting.

Kate Hill, 26 Meeker Court, asked about using a different material for the driveways since there was flooding in front of her house. She thought there would be more if asphalt was used.

Phyllis P Hauenstein, 19 Briar Street, described the road as being a driveway until Lawn St. She said that currently water collects on the driveway and does not see any drainage. She also had questions about elevations.

Atty Ryan began his rebuttal by reminding the public that the application conformed to the regulations. There were sign-offs from various City agencies in the file which confirmed that. He also said that Briar Street is a public street, although it looks like driveway.

Mr. D'Avanzo addressed many of the questions that the public raised including the testing of the ground, the drainage, and the grading. He hoped that no ledge would be found so that little blasting would have to be done. He did not think there would be additional run-off to 36 Meeker Court. He then reminded the public that the Department of Public Works would not allow 1 driveway to serve 3 houses. They would not be able to get a waiver. He also discussed the widening of the driveway at Briar Court. There was a discussion about the run-off and permeable asphalt. There was then a discussion as to what would be done to advise the neighbors about any blasting to be done. There was then another discussion of having the 3 houses on one driveway.

V. REPORT OF SUBDIVISION COMMITTEE, Joel Zaremby, Chair

a) Action on III. a. - Subdivision # 3637 – 35 Meeker Court, LLC – 35 Meeker Court – 4 Lots – Final review before public hearing (Postponed until October 13th)

**** MR. ZAREMBY MOVED:** that the application should be moved back to the Subdivision Committee.

Mr. Ferguson seconded.

Torgny Astrom, Chair; Fran DiMeglio; Victor Cavallo; Joel Zaremby; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne; David Davidson voted in favor.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

b) Subdivision #3627 – Kerschner Development, Co., LLC – 17 Morehouse Lane – 3 Lots – Request for return of maintenance bond

**** MR. ZAREMBY MOVED: RESOLVED** by the Norwalk Planning Commission that the request to release the maintenance surety held on Subdivision #3627 – Kerschner Development, Co., LLC – 17 Morehouse Lane – 3 Lots – Request for return of maintenance bond be APPROVED; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the effective date of this approval shall be October 23, 2015.

Mr. McLaughlin seconded.

Torgny Astrom, Chair; Fran DiMeglio; Victor Cavallo; Joel Zaremby; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne; David Davidson voted in favor.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. DiMeglio reported that the nominating committee was making recommendations as follows for the election of officers:

Torgny Astrom, Chairman
Frances DiMeglio, Vice Chair
Walter McLaughlin, Secretary

Mr. Astrom asked if there were any other nominations. There were none.

MS. DIMEGLIO MOVED to nominate Torgny Astrom, as Chairman, Frances DiMeglio, as Vice Chairman and Walter McLaughlin, as Secretary.

Mr. Ferguson seconded.

Before the vote was taken, Mr. Cavallo reminded everyone that the positions should be rotated to give everyone a chance to hold a position.

Torgny Astrom, Chair; Fran DiMeglio; Joel Zaremby; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne; David Davidson voted in favor.

No one opposed.

Victor Cavallo abstained.

VII. DISCUSSION OF MEETING TIMES

Mr. Astrom began the discussion by explaining why they were changing the meeting times of the Planning Commission. Mr. Strauch handed out calendars of 2016 to all of the commissioners. They were to consider changing the meetings to either the first Tuesday or the third Tuesday. Currently, they are on the second Tuesday. The commissioners decided that that the best day would be the 3rd Tuesday.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 8, 2015

Ms. DiMeglio asked that the votes be added to the resolution which was “No Action.”

Ms. DiMeglio moved to approve the minutes, as revised.

Mr. Zaremby seconded.

Torgny Astrom, Chair; Fran DiMeglio; Victor Cavallo; Joel Zaremby; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne; voted in favor.

No one opposed.

David Davidson abstained.

IX. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR

Mr. Greene had no comments.

X. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. McLaughlin was welcomed back to the commission. He was glad to be back. There was a discussion about what project was happening near Swanky Franks. Mr. Ferguson said that a change in state regulations has had an impact on gas stations being renovated. Mr. Ferguson also mentioned that he had no contact information now that he had a new position at First County Bank.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McLaughlin made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Zaremby seconded.

Torgny Astrom, Chair; Fran DiMeglio; Victor Cavallo; Joel Zaremby; Walter McLaughlin; Steven Ferguson; William Dunne; David Davidson voted in favor.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Diana Palmentiero