



ZONING COMMISSION
125 East Avenue - City Hall
Norwalk, CT 06851

MEMORANDUM

MARCH 1, 2018

TO: Zoning Commission, Nathan Sumpster, Chairman

FROM: Dorothy Wilson, Senior Planner

RE: #11-17SP/#29-17CAM – 230 East Avenue, LLC – 230 East Ave/3 & 10 Rowan St - Special permit/CAM site plan for a new 5-6 story, 276,408 sf mixed use development with 189 dwelling units, 39,492 sf office, 2,130 sf restaurant, 5,550 sf retail and 15,939 sf, 150 suite Pooch Hotel (existing) in 4 separate buildings with 311 pkg sp

APPLICANT NAME/ADDRESS: 230 East Avenue, LLC One North Water St Suite 100 Norwalk CT 06854

OWNER NAME/ADDRESS: Norwalk Improvements, LLC 580 White Plains Rd Tarrytown NY 10591

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 230 East Avenue/3 Rowan Street (D.3, B.33 Lots 15, 16, 17 and 32)

ZONING: Industrial #1/Neighborhood Business (first 100 ft along East Av) **LOT AREA:** 157,326 sq. ft (4 lots)

PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT: Industrial #1/Neighborhood Business (first 100 ft on East Av)

ZONING AMENDMENT: The proposed amendment to permit TOD at East Norwalk railroad station was referred to the Planning Commission, Harbor Management Commission and State of CT. CAM office for review & comment

EXISTING USE(S): The former Factory Outlet buildings are occupied by various offices uses & an animal care ctr.

ZONING VIOLATIONS: The Deputy Zoning Inspector confirmed that there are no known violations at this address.

PROPOSED USE/STRUCTURE: The applicant is proposing to rehabilitate the existing buildings on the site and to add two new structures: a new 6 story multifamily residential building along Rowan St and a new 2 ½ story retail/office building along East Ave. The resulting proposed 276,408 gross square foot mixed use, transit oriented development (TOD) would add or modify the onsite uses to include 189 multifamily residential dwelling units (211,513 sq ft), 39,492 square feet office, 4,260 sq ft gross (2,130 sq ft active) restaurant, 5,550 sq ft gross (4,163 sq ft active) retail and 15,939 square feet Pooch Hotel (existing) in two new buildings and two existing buildings with 311 parking spaces including 207 spaces in a below grade parking garage. The final design should provide for a more active streetscape to provide a pedestrian friendly environment by adding more landscaping, providing benches or other improvements to enhance the pedestrian environment. The application is currently incomplete.

PARKING: The property currently has 356 parking spaces on the site (97 non conforming spaces are located in a garage below Building A). The applicant is proposing to provide 311 spaces including 207 spaces in a new garage parking below Building B that will be connected below grade to the existing parking under Building A. The applicant has been asked to provide a Parking Management Plan and to revise the site plan parking layout to clearly show which parking spaces are/are not counted toward this development and which are reserved for train station parking

WORKFORCE HOUSING: The applicant submitted a revised Workforce Housing Plan which indicates that 20 workforce housing units will be provided. A unit breakdown was recently provided which indicates that there will be two studio units, 13 one bedroom units and 5 two bedroom units.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The applicant must confirm that DPW will approve the new driveway location on Osborne Ave between Rowan St and the railroad overpass. The sightlines are limited and it is anticipated that left turns out of the new driveway (if approved) could prove hazardous. The applicant has been asked to provide a lot consolidation survey and to confirm that applicant has rights of access across property owned by State of CT. and by the owner of 232 East Avenue (property line runs along Pooch Hotel building); provide copy of lease agreement, easement, deeds, etc. The applicant must confirm if existing parking lots provide required parking for any other properties (eg. determine if any parking easements or deed restrictions are on file for this or adjoining properties)

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING: We have a list of abutters in the file. The application was received on Dec 14, 2017 and the applicant sent the notices via certificate of mailing on Dec 21, 2017 (within 10 day time period).

SIGN-OFFS/REFERRALS: No sign-offs have been submitted from the DPW, WPCA, First Water District, Third Taxing District, Harbor Commission, Fire Marshal, Conservation, etc. A sign-off was received from the Health Dept. A CEAC meeting was held on Thursday January 25, 2018. The Zoning Inspector is currently reviewing the plans for zoning compliance.

OUTSTANDING ISSUES: The Commission cannot act on this application as it is incomplete; outstanding items include

- Confirm proposed plan complies with zoning for height, density, coverage, FAR, etc.
- Provide a Parking Management Plan to show how parking for residents and on site tenants will be managed along with spaces reserved for train station parking (including new parking to be shared with commuters)
- Provide all department sign-offs; sign-offs have not been received from DPW, WPCA, etc.

COASTAL SITE PLAN REVIEW: The report submitted indicates that the nearest coastal waters are more than 1000 ft away. Aerial photos indicate that the closest distance of the property to the CAM boundary is to the Mill Pond which is roughly ±800 ft. away.

HARBOR MANAGEMENT: The proposed work is located within the coastal management zone near to the Norwalk River and Harbor and is subject to review by the Norwalk Harbor Management Commission. The property is served by city water and sewer and the proposed development will generally maintain existing drainage patterns with overland and shallow concentrated flows which directly runoff to a discharge point. The stormwater system, as stated in the proposal will comply with the City of Norwalk's DEP policies, guidelines and requirements. The proposed development will result in a net decrease in the existing impervious surface by 10%. In addition to modifications of existing drywell basins, the proposal requires two hydrodynamic separators that will promote settling and capture of suspended solids. The Harbor Commission reviewed the proposed project at their meeting on January 24, 2018. (see comments in file)

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN: The applicant has been asked to provide colored renderings of various views of the buildings from each street along with colored elevations with all building materials and colors labeled. The staff indicated that the proposed buildings appear flat with few architectural details or dimensions; and suggested that the applicant consider adding stoops, cornices, awnings or other features to create interest and to reflect the character of historic industrial buildings and residential neighborhoods in East Norwalk. It was also suggested that the Rowan Street façade be enlivened with access to the existing building.

DRAINAGE REPORT: The Site Planner has reviewed the drainage report and plans and found them consistent with the new Drainage standards adopted in June 2017. The Department of Public Works (DPW) scheduled a meeting with the applicant to review preliminary comments and will review and comment on the revised plans once they are submitted by the applicant. The applicant proposes to maintain appropriate measures to reduce or otherwise manage run-off through implementation of a storm water maintenance and management plan. (see file) The staff recommends that the applicant provide alternatives to reduce impervious surfaces on the site such as adding rain gardens, a green roof, permeable pavers or other measures to control run-off.

TRAFFIC REPORT: A traffic report was submitted on January 3, 2018 and is under review. The applicant has been asked to confirm whether this application requires a review by the Office of the State Traffic Administration and to evaluate current traffic problems arising from seasonal events such as the 4th of July fireworks, Oyster Festival, Norwalk Boat Show etc. where the main site driveway is blocked by vehicles queuing for the traffic light. The traffic report and site plan shows multiple curb cuts including the existing primary driveway on East Avenue and several driveways along Rowan Street to remain along with one new two-way driveway on Osborne Avenue. The location of the primary driveway and the functioning of the 4 way intersection with East Avenue and Winfield Street (State Route 136) is currently under review by DPW. The traffic report indicates that no significant changes in LOS are anticipated and that traffic will function with no significant increases in delay. Extensive new road improvements and expansion of the railroad underpass on East Avenue are currently in the design phase and the applicant will be working with ConnDOT and DPW to determine what improvements are necessary to accommodate this development. The Zoning Commission has retained the services of WSP to conduct a peer review of traffic on behalf of the City.

OFFICE OF STATE TRAFFIC ADMINISTRATION: The applicant has been asked to confirm whether an application was submitted to the Office of State Traffic Administration and to provide a status memo describing meetings to date; a schedule for review of the current application by ConnDOT/OSTA.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS: Since the City is in the process of updating the existing Plan of Conservation and Development, the Commission may want to exercise caution in approving significant new amendments to the zoning regulations until the POCD planning process is complete and recommended areas for new development are clearly identified by the new Plan. In addition, a TOD planning study for the East Norwalk Railroad Station/East Avenue area will be conducted in 2018. However, the application has merits in that it enhances an underutilized parcel with direct transit access to the MetroNorth railroad and the proposed East Avenue TOD zone is confined to the parcels immediately adjacent to the rail platform so the TOD study can still be conducted without predetermining the bounds and shape that any future TOD area will take. The contract with Stantec is in the process of being revised to allow them to conduct a planning peer review of the proposal to review the proposal and to make a determination whether the proposal is appropriate for TOD in the East Norwalk area. As part of their deliberations, the Commissions should also consider whether the proposed FAR, residential density, building height and number of stories is appropriate for this site. In looking at potential TOD for this area it makes sense that there is more density concentrated in proximity to the train stations and density lowers as you move away of the stations and closer to the established neighborhoods. See Planning Commission comments in file.

PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing on the proposed amendment and special permit/CAM application is scheduled for March 1, 2018.

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH: The applicant met with neighbors on the following dates: Nov 16, 2017 with about 8-10 neighbors were in attendance (Deb Goldstein, Diane Cece, David Brown, Pam Parkington, John Kydes); January 13, 2018 with about 5 neighbors were in attendance (Pam Parkington, Diane Cece, Deb Goldstein, Judith Dominguez, Rick Tavella); Jan. 22, 2018 with about 10-15 neighbors/business owners were in attendance; Feb. 24, 2018 with Diane Cece, Deb Goldstein & others.