

**COMMISSION ON THE CITY PLAN
TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2020, 7:00 PM
Virtual/Remote Meeting
NORWICH, CT
REGULAR MEETING**

Assistant City Planner Daniel Daniska read information pertaining to virtual meetings and clearly stated that the meeting, including video, will be recorded.

A. CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chair Les King called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

B. ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES:

Present: Vice Chairman Les King, Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, Jason Courter, Kathy Warzecha and Michael Lahan (joined at 7:20 PM).

Absent: Chairman Frank Manfredi

Swarnjit Singh Bhatia and Jason Courter were seated as voting members.

Others Present: City Planner Deanna Rhodes, Assistant City Planner Dan Daniska and Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Kathy Warzecha, seconded by Jason Courter, the meeting minutes of the April 21, 2020 Commission on the City Plan (CCP) minutes were approved as presented. Les King abstained from the vote due to non-attendance.

D. COMMUNICATIONS:

a) Town of Sprague – Zoning Text Amendment Referral

City Planner Deanna Rhodes presented a notice from the Town of Sprague. They will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, June 3, 2020, at 7 PM. They proposed to set a moratorium on changes to regulations relating to recreational campgrounds in any zone for one year. She has no comments. There was general agreement with the City Planner's viewpoint that no comment or action was necessary.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

a) PUBLIC HEARING(S) AND POTENTIAL ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING APPLICATION(S):

1. SP #20-03: 77-91 Main Street. Request for a mixed-use building with 42 residential units (studio & 1-bedroom) and 10,288 square feet of commercial tenant space. Application and property of New England Rose LLC. Assessor's Map 102, Block 6, Lot 15. Zone CC.

On a motion Kathy Warzecha, seconded by Jason Courter, a public hearing was unanimously opened at 7:06 PM.

Bill Sweeney, a land use attorney from TCORS, and architect, Stephan Nousiopoulos represented the applicant. Mr. Sweeney displayed plans on the shared screen which had been previously posted on the CCP webpage. He gave the history of the site over the last few decades. The applicant went for a change of use in March, 2020, to the Zoning Board of Appeals to seek the necessary variances.

Mr. Nousiopoulos presented the plans for the project, including proposed floor plans for each floor of the multi-use proposed development.

Mr. Sweeney noted that there are no exterior changes proposed for the buildings. The site is in the Chelsea Central District and has no on-site parking nor is there a requirement for it. According to the Norwich Parking Commission there are 30 spots available for long-term lease in Main Street Garage. Upon build-out the applicant will secure those spaces. Also additional spaces will be freed up in 2021 when Merchantile lease comes up for renewal. Additionally 160 spaces are available at the Intermodal Transportation Center which can be used overnight. This number of available spaces will meet the needs of customers and tenants.

Mr. Sweeney noted that the applicant will be using historic tax credits towards financing. Each dwelling unit has a bathroom and kitchen. He highlighted the new opportunities for residents including new staff at Electric Boat, a generally younger, transient population that tends to utilize downtown spaces.

Ms. Rhodes requested that Vice Chair King seat Michael Lahan. Vice Chair King seated CCP regular member Michael Lahan at 7:20 PM.

Ms. Rhodes addressed specifics in her memo relating to the project. She read Question #3 regarding bike racks. Mr. Sweeney responded that the applicant would not put bike racks in the public right of way, but was willing to do install bike racks. Ms. Rhodes read Question #4 regarding trash and recycling. Mr. Sweeney referred to Mr. Nousiopoulos who explained that there will be a garbage compacter with a shoot on each floor on the north side of building. The applicant is proposing larger containers, perhaps 2 yard containers, instead of individual units. Ms. Rhodes noted that lighting has been discussed to her satisfaction. She raised a question about landscaping. Mr. Sweeney responded that there are opportunities for landscaping especially on the Water Street side of the buildings.

Ms. Rhodes requested a waiver of reading the exhibit list that was granted. She noted that in her memo she had presented eight bullet points that she would recommend, as well as external planters and bike racks.

Michael Lahan asked for clarification regarding use of the alleyway on #77 side with regards to lighting and maintenance plan.

No public comments were made.

Ms. Rhodes made comments regarding the request for a waiver of filing a site plan. Since no site work is needed and Norwich Public Utilities does not have any concerns, she sees no reason to have a site plan filed for the interior work.

On a motion by Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, seconded by Jason Courter, the public hearing was closed at 7:52 PM.

On a motion by Jason Courter, seconded by Michael Lathan, the waiver request for submission of a site plan and the filing of a mylar because there is no land disturbance activities associated with the application passed unanimously.

Kathy Warzecha made a motion to approve SP #20-03 with the following conditions:

1. That final revised plans be submitted and reviewed by City Staff.
2. That the proposed site amenities relative to the special permit shall be installed within 5 years of the approval unless an extension has been granted by the Commission.
3. That the City's required signature block and letter of approval be placed on the final floor plan/building elevation set.

4. That 4 paper copies final plans be submitted to the Planning Department for endorsement by an officer of the Commission.
5. That the certification of approval for the Special Permit use be filed with the City Clerk's office before becoming effective. This certification will be provided to the applicant by the City Planning Department post approval after the appeal period has ended.
6. That a zoning permit shall be issued prior to any activities commencing on the site.
7. That any modifications to the approved proposal shall be reviewed by the Zoning Enforcement Officer prior to occurring and may require additional review and approval by the Commission.
8. That all proposed improvements associated with this application are to be completed according to the approved plan prior to the issuance of the required Certificate of Zoning Compliance or a performance bond will be required in accordance with Sections 7.5.7.3 and 8.9 of the Zoning Regulations.
9. That bicycle racks be provided on Main & Water Streets in locations that are deemed suitable by City Staff.
10. That the applicant install planters or a similar landscaping alternative acceptable to the City along the sidewalks on both Main and Water Streets.
11. That the applicant work with City Staff to develop a lighting and maintenance plan for the alleyway adjoining the development. This plan may include installing light fixture on the exterior of the building to provide appropriate illumination in the alley.

The motion was seconded by Michael Lahan. The motion passed unanimously.

2. SUB #431: 612 West Thames Street. Request for a two (2) lot Re-subdivision on a parcel that includes an existing dwelling. Property and application of PPFR LLC (Kiran Parekh). Assessor's Map 129, Block 1, Lot 24. Zone MF.

Jason Courter recused himself from discussion and voting as he is an abutter. Vice Chair Les King noted Mr. Courter was no longer seated as a voting member.

On a motion by Michael Lahan, seconded by Kathy Warzecha, the CCP unanimously opened the public hearing on SUB #431 at 7:58 PM.

Pete Parent of CHA represented the applicant. The subject property is currently a 6 acre parcel with a house. The proposal would create a 1.3 acre parcel with the house to be sold as 621 West Thames Street. There is currently no plan to construct on the remaining area but to create a plan to show that the parcel is developable. A sewer connection easement is in place via Trading Cove Drive. Water and other utilities can come from state Route 32. The applicant will provide formal easement over lot 24 for sewer.

Ms. Rhodes brought the CCP's attention to the possibility of a conservation easement due to the steep slope along the read of the property which abuts current housing. She encouraged discussion on the issue. Assistant City Planner Dan Daniska asked about passive solar orientation of theoretical house on the plan. Ms. Rhodes questioned the sight line easements.

Discussion ensued about the notation of the proposed 1.3 acre lot at 612 West Thames Street as 24-1. The existing dwelling should retain the designation 24. The new lot should be 24-1. The easement will be over 24-1 to get to 24. Mr. Parent will make the necessary clarification.

Mr. Daniska noted there is a two car garage to be demolished on 24-1 to avoid a non-conformity. Ms. Rhodes asked that it come down as soon as possible.

Mr. Daniska asked to waive the reading of exhibits. The waiver was agreed upon.

Discussion was held on the potential for a conservation easement. Kathy Warzecha proposed an easement running from the 100' mark along the east side of the property near the steep slope and following the 110' contour line with a condition that if the applicant wanted to build a retaining wall the proposal would come back to the CCP.

It was confirmed that the lots have access to the Cove View Towers driveway for access to Route 32.

Ms. Rhodes noted that this is in a coastal area and a coastal site plan was submitted that is consistent at this time. It will have to come back to CCP if there will be a multi-family housing proposed.

Michael Lahan clarified that Mr. Parent agreed to the proposed conservation easement going 50 -75' along 110' contour line and connecting to the 100' angle point on the eastern side. The proposed line was indicated with a cursor on the screen for all to see.

There were no public comments either for or against the application.

On a motion by Michael Lahan, seconded by Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, the CCP unanimously closed the public hearing at 8:23 PM.

Kathy Warzecha made a motion to approve the Coastal Site Plan for SUB #431 – 612 West Thames Street with the following conditions:

1. That final revised plans be submitted and reviewed by City Staff, including all unaddressed comments in staff and Planner's memos. Plan revisions include switching the lot numbers (the existing house lot should remain Lot 24).
2. That the City's Letter of Approval be placed on the final revised plan set and mylar (cover page preferred).
3. That the Letter of Approval from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission be placed on the Final Plan Set for the Subdivision (cover page preferred) AND any subsequent maps that are created after this approval.
4. That the final plan be revised to include a Conservation Easement to protect the steep slope toward the bottom of the parcel, generally around the ledge area and along the 110' contour line from West to East between the angle points of the parcel. The Conservation Easement must be acceptable to City Staff prior to the filing of mylars.
5. That an erosion and sediment control bond estimate be submitted with the plot plan submitted for development of Lot 24-1. The City Engineer will review the estimate and determine whether the amount is sufficient and increase if deemed necessary. Bonds must be submitted in a form acceptable to the City (check or letter of credit) prior to any land disturbance activities occurring.
6. Two (2) mylars and six (6) prints of the plan must be submitted to the Planning Department for endorsement by the Chairman of the Commission on the City Plan. Mylars for the approved subdivision must be filed on the Norwich Land Records at the Office of the City Clerk within ninety (90) days of the official date of approval. The State of Connecticut Statue allows for a maximum of two (2) ninety (90) extensions that must be granted by the Commission.
7. That certification by a licensed land surveyor be submitted to indicate that the installation of property boundary markers in accordance with the subdivision plan has been completed prior to the filing of the mylars.
8. That the plan depict the limits of the sewer easement, and all draft legal documents be submitted to the City for this easement within 30 days for review and comment by the City Attorney and Director of Public Works. Filing of any easements shall not occur until the City has approved the documents.
9. That the existing brown two car garage on the parcel be removed prior to the filing of mylars or a bond must be posted (in the form of a letter of credit or check) for the full cost of demolition & removal.

Reasons: The Coastal resources will not be impacted relative to this re-subdivision and any future development beyond that of a single-family dwelling will require referral again to DEEP for Coastal Area Management review.

Michael Lahan seconded the motion. The CCP unanimously approved the motion.

Kathy Warzecha made a motion to approve SUB #431 with the following conditions:

1. That final revised plans be submitted and reviewed by City Staff, including all unaddressed comments in staff and Planner's memos. Plan revisions include switching the lot numbers (the existing house lot should remain Lot 24).
2. That the City's Letter of Approval be placed on the final revised plan set and mylar (cover page preferred).
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4. That the final plan be revised to include a Conservation Easement to protect the steep slope toward the bottom of the parcel, generally around the ledge area and along the 110' contour line from West to East between the angle points of the parcel. The Conservation Easement must be acceptable to City Staff prior to the filing of mylars.
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6. Two (2) mylars and six (6) prints of the plan must be submitted to the Planning Department for endorsement by the Chairman of the Commission on the City Plan. Mylars for the approved subdivision must be filed on the Norwich Land Records at the Office of the City Clerk within ninety (90) days of the official date of approval. The State of Connecticut Statue allows for a maximum of two (2) ninety (90) extensions that must be granted by the Commission.
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9. That the existing brown two car garage on the parcel be removed prior to the filing of mylars or a bond must be posted (in the form of a letter of credit or check) for the full cost of demolition & removal.

Michael Lahan seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair King reseated Jason Courter.

F. OLD BUSINESS: None

G. EXTENSION REQUESTS: SDP #921(B) & SDP #1007 – Lofts @ Ponemah Mills: Not addressed.

H. BOND REDUCTION / RELEASE REQUESTS: None

I. OTHER BUSINESS: None

J. POCD PIC MEETING UPDATE + REMINDER: Ms. Rhodes reminded the members of the next POCD-PIC meeting, which may be held virtually on July 8, 2020.

K. STAFF REPORT: Ms. Rhodes asked the CCP members for their availability for a special meeting of the CCP next week, May 26, 2020, at 5 PM, to discuss the extension requests. She will confirm via email to ensure a quorum.

L. ADJOURNMENT: On a motion by Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, seconded by Kathy Warzecha, the CCP unanimously adjourned at 8:29 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Melinda Wilson
Recording Secretary*