

MINUTES
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 14, 2016

The West Haven Planning and Zoning commission held a Special Public Hearing and Special Meeting on Monday, November 14, 2016, in the Harriet North Room, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT at 7:00PM

Present were Commissioners Hendricks, Posey, Standish, Biancur, ZEO Conniff, Assistant City Planner Killeen, Commissioner of Planning and Development Riccio, Corporation Counsel Amendola. Absent were Commissioners Mullins, Suggs, and Cohen

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Chairperson Hendricks called the meeting to order at 7:00PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The approval of the November 10, 2016 meeting will be held during the next meeting, Tuesday, November 22.

Chairperson Hendricks announced that the items listed under Deliberations and Action of the Special Meeting, Items 1.i. through 1. Iiii, will not be discussed this evening. The automotive repair shop at 872 Orange Avenue was decided on November 10, and the other two items were continued to the meeting of November 22.

Public Hearing:

1. **Proposed Amendments to the zoning Regulations.** Application for approval of a revised set of Transit Oriented Development regulations to replace the existing Article 2, Section 35 of the regulations. Applicant: City of West Haven, CT. File #ZR 16-234

Robert Orr spoke on behalf Robert Orr associate and Marina Khoury on behalf of DPZ Partners. The two firms were hired as contractors by the city to help with the development of a vision for development around the train station and to develop an improved set of Transit Oriented Development Regulations that would replace the existing ones in Article 2, Section 35 of the regulations. The consultants are present to give a presentation about what they suggest the changes should look like. They talked about development near the train station and creating it in such a way that would appeal to the millennial generation. They talked about the millennial population preferring smaller housing units such as studio apartments, which would discourage family renters. They also talked about storefront development, and accessibility near the train station with a central goal of appealing the town to the millennial generation. Mr. Orr emphasized how small lot development can increase tax revenues for a community. Ms. Khoury explained the components of the

proposed regulation, which would regulate the size and character of new development through a Form-Based Code system.

Chairperson Hendricks asked if there were any questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Biancur raised the concern that, if dollars go up in revenues, what increases would be anticipated for the consumption of services. Would there be an increase in police costs because of new development in the TOD District?

The consultants said that they were not asked to look into that, but they can if that is what the city would like. Ms. Khoury explained that TOD development, under the regulation, is an efficient layout, which goes well with the location of the current police officers and other services. Commissioner Biancur was generally satisfied with her response.

Public Session:

Start: 7:29PM

Carol Soter, 45 Third Avenue Ext.

Mrs. Soter had concern about the housing plans in the presentation given by the consultants. She did not want more housing in West Haven. She was concerned that there was already so much housing in West Haven. She is also concerned about the density of the area.

Commissioner Hendricks reminded the public that they are creating rules and regulations that will act as guidelines for developers for when they look at West Haven for development in the Transit Oriented Development district.

Commissioner Biancur also reminded the public that they are not talking about traditional houses; they are talking about one-bedroom loft/studio apartment type homes for millennial, discouraging families with children.

Commissioner Hendricks further commented that they are seeing that people with children are not usually attracted to move to the kind of area that is being encouraged through this new regulation. TOD developments tend to attract empty nesters and millennials, people that want to be able to come and go from the train station and are less concerned with owning real estate or other property, such as vehicles.

Francis Withington, 223 Westwalk. Mr. Withington liked the updated regulations and hopes that they are approved.

Jane Whelan, 100 Aimes Drive.

Ms. Whelan is worried about the facts that millennial populations, in the future, are going to want children and they are going to want to live in West Haven with their children and then there won't be a place for them.

Commissioner Biancur addressed her concern by telling her that the way the regulation is going to be set up, we are encouraging millennial to move in and discouraging families from moving in by building a higher percentage (70%) of one bedroom and studio units than other types of units.

Kathie Hebert, 166 Blohm Street

Ms. Hebert is in favor of the current changes being made to the Transit Oriented Development regulations. She wants to point out she agrees with the commission because she has noticed that most millennials do not own cars, but they use Uber. She could also see herself and her husband becoming one of the empty nesters that would like to move to a place like the one envisioned.

Victor Borrás, 170 Shingle Hill Road.

Mr. Borrás agrees with the plan and thinks that change is positive and that the commission is headed in the right direction.

Mayor Edward O'Brien, 36 Platt Avenue.

Mayor O'Brien talked about his experience at the Mayor's Institute on City Design in Florida. He learned that West Haven is a lot farther ahead than other towns. He believes that people want to live near the train station because they don't want to drive cars; they want to live in a place where they can just get on and off a train to get to and from work. The goal is to get millennials that do not want to have kids to move here because they desire to live in this environment and they have disposable income. When they are ready to have kids, they can move to the suburbs where they can create that lifestyle. We want to build around the train station because right now we have vacant buildings, parking, and the Armstrong building. The Mayor wanted to clarify that the specific graphics shown in the presentation are not proposed to come to West Haven at this time. They were illustrative and intended to conceptualize ideas of where we want West Haven to go.

Commissioner Hendricks also pointed out that there is not just housing proposed in this plan, there are details in here for storefronts, retail, small businesses, information companies. Commissioner Hendricks went on to say that this is intended to lay a framework to open us to for people to come and look at the area in order to develop that area and redevelop that area, that in order to invite people in and to invest in our city, we must create this plan.

Commissioner Riccio believed it would be possible to check on typical public service demands for TOD developments.

Public Session closed at 7:52

Commissioner Hendricks motioned to approve the adoption of the revised TOD Regulations, File #ZR 16-234. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Posey and approved unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.