

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **522-528 STATE STREET.** Special Exception to permit 0 off-street parking spaces where 8 are required for the use of a gym. Zone: BD. (20-02-S) (Owner: 522-528 State Street, LLC. Applicant: Anthony Arnold)

REPORT: **1566-06**

ADVICE: **Special Exception: Approve**

PRINCIPAL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Section 63 (d) - The Board of Zoning Appeals may grant a *Special Exception* if the proposed use is in accord with the public convenience and welfare, and may attach conditions and safeguards deemed necessary to protect the neighborhood.

Section 63. (d)(6) - In the following types of special exception cases, which involve more than conventional questions of *use* and may have a significant impact on surrounding areas and a substantial relationship to the comprehensive plan of the city, the Board of Zoning Appeals shall, following its hearing, refer the case including all exhibits to the City Plan Commission, which shall submit an advisory report, on such factors as it may deem relevant, to the Board within 30 days after receiving all records and documents in the case. This report of the City Plan Commission shall be taken into account in the decision of the Board.

f) Adjustment of parking and loading requirements: §29.C; §29.H.2; §29.I; §45.A.6.b; §45.A.7.

Section 45(a)(1)(n): Parking – One per four seats (total capacity).

BACKGROUND

The applicant is seeking a Special Exception to permit 0 off-street parking spaces where 8 parking spaces are required for the use of a gym. The 3,920sf structure is located on a 5,175sf lot on State Street. The site was formerly the Elks Lodge/Club which provided seating for 190 people with no on-site parking. The proposed use will occupy approximately 3,200sf of the total space

FEBRUARY 11 PUBLIC HEARING

The applicant presented his application stating that the previous use of the “Elks’s Lodge” had a higher capacity and therefor would have required more parking spaces than the current proposal. The majority of clients are anticipated to take alternative modes of transportation and is closely located to bus, train, and bike services with a city owned parking lot within close proximity.

No members of the public spoke either in support or opposition of this application.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

Special Exception Considerations

Section 63(d) of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance review in relation to the applicable criteria of this section results in the following comments:

- Nature of the Proposed Site: The 5,175sf parcel consists of a currently vacant 1-story structure. As mentioned above the site was previously used as the Elks Lodge/Club with no on-site parking.
- Resulting Traffic Patterns: The former use at the site provided seating for 190 people, the applicant states that the gym will have classes by appointment with an average of 10 people per class which is a significant decrease in overall usage. The applicant also states that based on experience, 50-75% of the clientele will use alternative modes of transportation such as walking, biking, or bus. Given the proximity to various bus stops and the State Street Train Station staff does not anticipate any negative impact on traffic patterns.

- Nature of the Surrounding Area: The property is located on State Street near the intersection at Grand Avenue where the majority of neighboring uses are that of mixed use (commercial/residential) as well as several office buildings with a parking lot abutting the subject property to the south.
- Proximity to Public Buildings: There are no public buildings located within the immediate vicinity of this property.
- The Comprehensive Plan: This application is in substantive compliance with New Haven Vision 2025 in that it is reflective of the recommendation found in the Transportation section of that document to “Facilitate increased public transit use in the city through increased densities, reduced parking requirements and integrated pedestrian and bicycle network wherever possible”.

The applicant stated that the site sits directly in front of the State Street bicycle route with the Orange Street route nearby. There are also two Bike New Haven bike share docks in the vicinity on Elm Street and at the State Street Train Station. The applicant is also seeking permission from the city to install a bicycle rack for 8 bicycles directly in front of the building.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on considerations discussed above, the Commission views the Special Exception to be essentially in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the ordinance and that the public health, safety, and general welfare will be served, and substantial justice done by its approval. Therefore, the Commission recommends approval.

ADOPTED: February 19, 2020
Ed Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: _____
Aïcha Woods
Executive Director, City Plan Department