

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **ZONING MAP AMENDMENT.** Petition to amend the New Haven Zoning Map to re-zone 455 Greenwich Avenue from the RM-2 zone to the BA zone. (Submitted by: Jenna Montesano, Deputy Director of City Plan Department)

REPORT: **1571-05**

ADVICE: **Approve**

ADDRESS(ES): 455 Greenwich Avenue
SITE AREA: 0.17 acres or 7,500 SF
EXISTING ZONE(S): RM-2
PROPOSED ZONE: BA
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION: Mixed-Use
APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER: Carlos Rodriguez
ATTORNEY: Bernard Pellegrino, Esq.

SUBMISSION

Application includes: Checklist Coversheet for Aldermanic Submissions; Cover Letter from Jenna Montesano to President Tyisha Walker-Meyers, dated June 25, 2020; Cover Letter from Attorney Bernard Pellegrino to President Tyisha Walker-Meyers, dated June 25, 2020; Petition for Amendment to New Haven Zoning Map; Ordinance RE: Zoning Map Amendment to Change the Re-zone 455 Greenwich Avenue from RM-2 to BA zone; Prior Notification Form; Fiscal Impact Statement; Map and Property Description. Received May 2019.

BACKGROUND

The applicant purchased a home around the corner on 1st Street and is an owner occupant in the neighborhood. The applicant developed an idea to construct a mix-use building on this parcel. The first floor will be a commercial kitchen associated with the applicant's award-winning food truck. He proposes residential units above. He intends for the units to be affordable and a valuable addition to the community. No taxes are currently being collected on this parcel.

Starting in the summer of 2018, the applicant began conversation with the Hill South Management Team. He received a letter of support to develop this site as a mixed-use building (business use on ground floor and 2 apartments upstairs). The applicant has budgeted about \$300,000 to develop this site, and LCI is confident that this structure can be developed within the proposed budget. In early 2019, the applicant went through the LCI Land Disposition process. Disposition of this lot for this purpose was approved by the Board of Alders. The contract between the City and the applicant is contingent on zoning. The applicant would otherwise need variances for the use and the setbacks as proposed. Since this lot is abutting a BA zone, it is reasonable to rezone this lot to a commercial zoning district.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The subject lot is located near the triangular intersection of Kimberly Avenue, Greenwich Avenue, and Lamberton Street in a business center in the Hill neighborhood. The property borders this neighborhood-scale commercial area and is the first property zoned RM-2 abutting the BA district. The property is currently vacant.

PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Converting this property to BA will bring future, proposed uses into conformity with the surrounding area and provide a more flexible zoning designation. Contingent upon the approval of this zone change, the potential owner proposes a commercial first floor kitchen for his food truck business and residential dwelling units above as proposed in the potential owner's application through LCI for the disposition of this lot to him.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

New Haven Vision 2025 has a section on Housing and Neighborhood Planning that speaks to the importance of homeownership and a diversity of housing types and options. The comprehensive plan speaks to the goal to preserve and expand existing high-quality housing stock and privately-owned property. We seek to continue using the city's Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) to advance housing and neighborhood objectives, including appropriate densities, home ownership and contextual design—a process that should be timely and encourage stabilization and revitalization of publicly owned property. This zone change will enable the disposition of City-owned property for the creation and maintenance of locally owned business and housing stock. This zone change is the final piece of a LDA Agreement that will enable a project that will bring value, businesses, and housing diversity to the neighborhood. It will also put this piece of property back on the tax roll.

Section 64(d) asks this Commission to review several factors when voting to amend the Zoning Ordinance and/or Map. This Commission finds that this zoning proposal comports with those factors:

- a. *“[Whether] there are errors in the existing ordinance, changes that have taken place in the city and in patterns of construction and land use, the supply of land and its peculiar suitability for various purposes, the effect of a map change on the surrounding area, the purposes of zoning and the comprehensive plan of the City of New Haven;”*

This commission finds that this parcel is particularly well situated next to an existing BA zoning district such that re-zoning it will following existing patterns of land use. This piece of land is of a size and orientation such that is it particularly suited for a mixed-use purpose. As discussed above, this zoning change comports with the comprehensive plan of the City of New Haven.

- b. *“Whether some other method or procedure under the zoning ordinance is more appropriate; and”*

The only other procedure by which this proposed disposition is feasible is by variance. To accomplish the goals of this disposition and the building project, variances are not more appropriate because the general goals of land use are to eliminate variances and to grant them sparingly. It is a better policy to revise the existing zoning map. This revision will create more development potential for the applicant, reduce administrative costs and delays associated with variance applications, which are a known barrier to small business owners and affordable housing units.


- c. *“In the case of a map change, the size of the area involved. As a general policy, the City Plan Commission shall not consider favorably any petition which would result in a total contiguous area (separated only by streets, and excluding the area of streets) of less than two acres in the case of a residence district, less than one acre in the case of a Business District, or less than four acres in the case of an Industrial District.”*

This map change will involve an area that will result in a total contiguous area, zoned BA, of close to 10 acres. The resulting RM-2 district, even without this parcel, is even larger than that.

ADVICE

Approve

ADOPTED: July 15, 2020
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: 
Aicha Woods
Executive Director, City Plan Department