The Planning & Zoning Commission held a Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 28, 2017 at the Plaza Level Conference Room of 260 Constitution Plaza, Hartford, CT 06103.

Attendance
Present: Chair Sara Bronin, Commissioners David Blatt, Sandra Bobowski, Melvyn Colón, Anthony Koos; Alternates Toni Gold and Kristen Marcroft
Absent: Commissioners Aaron Gill, and John Thomas; 
Staff Present: Caitlin Palmer, Lisa Silvestri and Vanessa Walton

CALL TO ORDER
Chair Sara Bronin called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm and announced that Commissioners Gold and Marcroft would be sitting for Commissioners Gill and Thomas in their absence.

PUBLIC HEARING
a. 898-900 New Britain Avenue- Special Permit application to allow a smoking place, (Hookah Lounge) in an existing ground floor commercial space. Principal Planner Caitlin Palmer gave an overview of the proposal. She reported that the hours for the establishment would be Sunday through Thursday, 4:00 pm – 2:00 am, with extended hours on Friday and Saturday, 4:00 pm – 4:00 am. This establishment would also allow patrons to “BYOB”, Bring-Your-Own-Beverage. Attorney Catherine Freeman of 26 Rosalind Street was present and testified that she represented the Southwest Action Team as well as herself in a personal capacity. She raised concern regarding the on-going parking issues on her street, which is affected by the establishments at that location, and regarding the proposed hours of operation of the business in a single-family residential area. Chair Bronin read into the record a letter from Mr. Donato Gheranoli, who resides on New Britain Avenue, that expressed his opposition regarding the opening of a smoking place in his neighborhood. The applicant, Ms. Jahaira Rouzier was present and answered questions from the Commission. There were no other testimonies for this item and Chair Bronin CONTINUED the public hearing until the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

b. 149 Buckingham Street and 225-261 Hudson Street- Zoning map change application from NX-1 Neighborhood Mix district to MS-3 Main Street district. Principal Planner Caitlin Palmer gave an overview of the application which is a map change proposal that is necessary to allow a lot
merge with three other existing parcels which are currently zoned as MS-3. The applicant, Noble Gas Inc. c/o Mr. Michael Frisbee, was present and he answered questions from the Commission. Also present to speak on the matter was Mr. Marc Gottesdiener, who was the owner of the adjacent property at 161-165 Buckingham Street, and the property at Buckingham and Wadsworth Streets. He expressed his concern regarding “spot zoning”. There were no additional testimonies, and the public hearing was closed. The Commission discussed the proposal and voted in favor of the zoning map change from NX-1 to MX-3. The application was APPROVED by a 5-2 vote with Commissioners Marcroft and Koos voting in opposition.

CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
RESOLUTION

Zoning Map Change
149 Buckingham Street and 255-261 Hudson Street

WHEREAS, 149 Buckingham Street and 255-261 Hudson Street are currently zoned NX-1 Neighborhood Mix district; and

WHEREAS, The parcels are located adjacent to three MS-3 parcels at the corner of Buckingham and Hudson; and

WHEREAS, The applicant has requested this zone change in order to merge five lots into one lot and facilitate a mixed-use development at this location; and

WHEREAS, This zone change request and proposed lot combination also requested by the applicant is an enlargement of the existing MS-3 commercial node allowed at this corner; and

WHEREAS, Such change is compatible with the Plan of Conservation and Development and the goals of vision stated within to create a mixed-use neighborhood in that area;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, The City of Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission approves the zoning map change from the NX-1 district to the MS-3 district at 149 Buckingham Street and 255-261 Hudson Street; and

RESOLVED, This twenty-eighth day of March 2017.

c. 131, 139, 149 Buckingham Street and 251, 255-261 Hudson Street- Special Permit application for a new automobile refueling station and mixed-use building containing a retail market and eight residential units. Principal Planner Caitlin Palmer gave an overview of the proposal and recommended that the Commission approve it with conditions. The applicant, Noble Gas, Inc.
c/o Mr. Michael Frisbie was present and gave a brief presentation of the plans and answered questions from the Commission. Also present to speak on the proposal were Mr. Jim Thompson, owner of 96-98 Wadsworth Street, who spoke in favor of allowing this project, Mr. Mark Smith and Mr. Michael Weissbrod, who were both members of the design team and Mr. Marc Gottesdiener who owns two Buckingham Street lots, who spoke in opposition of the project and specifically the location of the pumps. His complaint is that the pumps are right along his property line. He presented a signed petition from the tenants of his property who are in agreement with him. He also raised concern that the location of the pumps would limit what could be developed on his properties. There were no additional testimonies, presentations or comments and the public hearing was closed. The Commission discussed this item and the following conditions were added:

6) The Solar Canopy Design must be approved by staff in conformance with the regulations;

7) The underground gas tanks be moved to the rear of the property along Hudson Street and away from the abutting Buckingham Street property;

8) The applicant must work with staff to receive approval on additional landscape screening on the western property line;

9) The base material shall be changed from concrete masonry units (CMU) to granite or other more durable material as approved by staff;

10) A Certificate of Occupancy for the apartments be issued within 18 months of any Temporary Certificate of Occupancy issued for the ground floor/Automobile Service use;

Commissioner Gold made a MOTION to APPROVE the application with the additional conditions. Seconded by Commissioner Bobowski. The application was APPROVED by a vote of 5-2 with Commissioners Marcroft and Koos voting in opposition.

CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION
SPECIAL PERMIT

APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL PERMIT FOR AN AUTOMOBILE REFUELING STATION and MIXED-USE BUILDING and APPROVAL OF A LOT COMBINATION
131, 139, 149 Buckingham Street and 251, 255-261 Hudson Street
March 28, 2017

WHEREAS, The Planning & Zoning Commission has reviewed a special permit to demolish the existing auto repair shop at and construct a new automobile refueling station with a mixed-use building, with ground floor convenience market space and two floors of residential (eight units) above at 131, 139, 149 Buckingham Street and 251, 255-261 Hudson Street; and

WHEREAS, The applicant is also proposing to combine the five parcels involved in order to create one developable site for the proposal; and

WHEREAS, The commission has approved a zoning map change for two parcels at 149 Buckingham and 255-261 Hudson streets to facilitate the lot combination and proposed development;
and

WHEREAS, The proposal meets the requirements of the zoning regulations and is working to integrate the comment received from the Department of Public Works traffic engineer and city forester; and

WHEREAS, The proposal to create a mixed-use development and construct an automobile fueling station is in keeping with the goals of the Plan of Conservation and Development to create a mixed-use neighborhood in this area along Buckingham Street; and

WHEREAS, The applicant is commended for creating a proposal for an Automobile Refueling Station that is in keeping with the form-based code of providing a building that fronts the street(s) and maintains fueling dispensers in the rear; and

WHEREAS, The Planning & Zoning Commission hereby delegates staff to approve the lot combination of the parcels known as 131, 139, 149 Buckingham Street and 251, 255-261 Hudson Street, creating one MS-3 district parcel; and

WHEREAS, The Planning & Zoning Commission hereby approves this special permit to construct a new automobile refueling station with a mixed-use building, with ground floor convenience market space and two floors of residential (eight units) above, at 131, 139, 149 Buckingham Street and 251, 255-261 Hudson Street per the approved site plan submitted, entitled “Noble Hartford, 131 Buckingham Street, Hartford CT 06106, Planning and Zoning Submission, March 1, 2017” created by Crosskey Architects, LLC et al., 750 Main Street, Suite 150, Hartford CT 06103 with revised drawings dated through March 23, 2017 with the following conditions:

1) The vinyl siding on the rear of the property shall be replaced with cement fiber board clapboard panels and the color change must correspond to an articulation in the façade,

2) An increase in the height of the parapet to create conformance with the regulations requirement of 24” or within 15% of that requirement,

3) The applicant confirms the ground floor transparency along Buckingham Street and submit revised elevations showing conformance with the 65% requirement if necessary,

4) A revised soil erosion and sediment control plan should be submitted showing the location of the temporary stockpile,

5) Determine the details of the current easement and work with the necessary agency, be it City or State, to redraw the boundaries of the property to eliminate the extension of the property over the sidewalk,

6) The Solar Canopy Design must be approved by staff in conformance with the regulations;

7) The underground gas tanks be moved to the rear of the property along Hudson Street and away from the abutting Buckingham Street property; and

8) The applicant must work with staff to receive approval on additional landscape screening on the western property line.

9) The base material shall be changed from concrete masonry units (CMU) to granite or other more durable material as approved by staff.
10) A Certificate of Occupancy for the apartments be issued within 18 months of any Temporary Certificate of Occupancy issued for the ground floor/Automobile Service use;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, This twenty-eighth day of March, 2017.

The Commission recessed for approximately 10 minutes

d. Proposed revisions to provisions in the Zoning Regulations regarding transportation shelters, signage, accessibility structures, alcohol-related uses, transmission towers, communication antennas, and other matters. Chair Bronin gave an overview of the proposed amendments and read into the record the sections to be revised. Mr. Darin Senna from Hartford Sign Company and Mr. Jesse Reidhaar from Lauretano Sign Group were present and addressed the Commission regarding signage. The Commission reviewed the text changes and Commissioner Bobowski made a MOTION that the changes be APPROVED. Seconded by Commissioner Gold. The Commission voted unanimously to APPROVE the changes by a vote of 7-0. Copies of the proposed changes can be obtained at the City and Town Clerks Office, 550 Main Street, Hartford, CT.

REGULAR MEETING

a. CIP Update- Applicant: City of Hartford. Mr. Darrell V. Hill, Chief Financial Officer for the City of Hartford gave an overview of the Capital Improvement Program budget for Fiscal Year 2018. He was seeking a favorable recommendation from the Commission to present the financial package to Mayor Bronin for submission to the City Council. Commissioner Gold MOVED that the Commission APPROVE the CIP Report as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Colón. The report was APPROVED by a vote of 6-1, with Commissioner Bobowski in opposition.

b. 8-24 Review- El Mercado Sale of City Land at 704-710 Park Street and 31 Lawrence Street. El Mercado is a one story building situated on a little more than a ½ acre lot. Principal Planner Caitlin Palmer gave an overview of the proposal and recommended approval. Commissioner Koos MOVED that the Commission accept the proposal. Seconded by Commissioner Gold. Commissioner Colón Abstained. The 8-24 Review was APPROVED by a vote of 6-0.

c. Inland Wetlands Application Determination – 1577 Albany Avenue- 1 Elizabeth Street, 61 Woodland Street, 28 Woodside Circle, 230 Scarborough Street. Principal Planner Sandy Fry, who is also the Inlands Wetlands Agent for the City of Hartford gave an overview of the report. The applicant is proposing to clean a number of segments of large capacity sewer lines which run under the North Branch of the Park River. Jason Waterbury of MDC and John Wisowski of CH2M Health was present to address and answer questions from the Commission. Commissioner Koos MOVED that that the application be APPROVED, Seconded by Commissioner Gold. The application was APPROVED by a vote of 7-0.

CHAIRS REPORT

There was nothing to report
DIRECTOR’S REPORT
There was nothing to report

NEW/OLD BUSINESS
There was no new or old business

MINUTES
February 28, 2017 Minutes- APPROVED by a vote of 5-0 with abstentions from Commissioners Koos and Marcroft.

ADJOURMENT
Chair Bronin adjourned the meeting at 10:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Vanessa Walton, Executive Assistant