



**CITY OF HARTFORD  
Planning & Zoning Commission  
260 Constitution Plaza – Hartford, CT**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

July 13, 2021

The Planning & Zoning Commission held a Hybrid Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 13, 2021.

**Attendance**

Present (In-Person): Chair Josye Utick, Commissioners Gary Bazzano, Aaron Gill, Jonathan Harding, and David McKinley, and Alternate Commissioners Andres Jimenez-Franck, and Guy Neumann.

Present (Virtually): Commissioner Aaron Gill, and Alternate Commissioner Juliana Garcia-Uribe.

Absent: Commissioner Kelvin Thomas.

Staff Present: Aimee Chambers, Attorney Rich Vassallo, and Paige Berschet.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Josye Utick called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm. Chair Josye Utick seated Alternate Commissioners Juliana Garcia-Uribe and Andres Jimenez-Franck for the meeting.

**II. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED**

There were no new applications received.

**III. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- a. **99 Van Block Ave** – Zone Map Amendment from NX-1 to NX-1 with the Campus Overlay per Section 1.3.5.A. Owner: MLK Cooperative Inc.; Applicant: Jon Tunsky. Opening Hearing Deadline: August 26, 2021.

Director Aimee Chambers presented the staff report.

Commissioner David McKinley recused himself from the 99 Van Block Public Hearings and Chair Josye Utick seated Commissioner Guy Neumann.

Ms. Mary Dehais and Ms. Emily Wolfe were present on behalf of the applicant, and had nothing to add to the staff's report. Public Comment was opened and there were no comments or testimony from the public.

45  
46 Commissioner Gary Bazzano stated that the overlay allows flexibility with the new  
47 development and made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the resolution as presented by staff,  
48 **SECONDED** by Commissioner Guy Neumann. The resolution was approved with a  
49 vote of **7-0**.

50  
51 **CITY OF HARTFORD**  
52 **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION**  
53 **99 VAN BLOCK AVENUE**  
54 **ZONING MAP AMENDMENT FROM NX-1 TO NX-1 WITH THE CAMPUS OVERLAY**  
55 **PER SECTION 1.3.5.A**

- 56  
57 **Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application and  
58 attached documents regarding the request for a Zoning Map Amendment from NX-1  
59 to NX-1 with the Campus Overlay per Section 1.3.5.A; and  
60  
61 **Whereas,** The base zoning district, NX-1, is not proposed to change; and  
62  
63 **Whereas,** The addition of the Campus overlay district does not add additional permitted uses to  
64 the zoning district; and  
65  
66 **Whereas,** The existing use of the site is consistent with the proposed zone change; and  
67  
68 **Whereas,** The addition of the Campus overlay will allow for master plan review, a process  
69 which purposefully implements the goals of the City of Hartford Plan of  
70 Conservation & Development; and  
71  
72 **Whereas,** The Campus overlay district is intended to encourage the design of walkable,  
73 economically efficient developments consistent with the overall priorities of the Plan  
74 of Conservation and Development; and  
75  
76 **Whereas,** The subject property is approximately 7.3 acres and located in an area suitable for  
77 developments of the scale and design consistent with the proposed Campus overlay;  
78 and  
79  
80 **Whereas,** The subject property meets the minimum lot size and width necessary for  
81 construction as required by the proposed zoning district; and  
82  
83 **Whereas,** The development scale and type possible with the proposed zoning district is  
84 consistent with the future land use assigned to the property (medium density  
85 residential 3-6 stories); and  
86  
87 **Whereas,** The CSS/CON NRZ has issued a letter of support for the proposed zoning map  
88 amendment; and

89 Now therefore Be It  
90

91 **Resolved,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby denies/approves the  
92 request for a Zoning Map Amendment from NX-1 to NX-1 with the Campus  
93 Overlay per Section 1.3.5.A for property located at the southern corner of the  
94 intersection of Van Block Avenue and Luis Ayala Lane:  
95

96 Be It Further,  
97

98 **Resolved,** This 13th day of July, 2021.  
99

- 100 b. **99 Van Block Ave** – Special Permit for a Master Plan per Section 1.3.4, pursuant to  
101 Section 5.1.2.A. Owner: MLK Cooperative Inc.; Applicant: Jon Tunsky. Opening  
102 Hearing Deadline: August 26, 2021.  
103

104 Director Aimee Chambers presented the staff report and answered Commissioner’s  
105 questions.  
106

107 Ms. Mary Dehais and Ms. Emily Wolfe were present on behalf of the applicant. Ms.  
108 Mary Dehais stated that the bike parking plans were not indicated on the master plan,  
109 and would add additional traffic calming measures and add to the tree canopy based on  
110 staff recommendations. Ms. Mary Dehais indicated that they had planned for 6’  
111 sidewalks, but could increase one side to 8’ to allow for a combined bike and walk path.  
112

113 Chair Josye Utick asked if there was room to decrease the overall impervious surface  
114 area and add more traffic calming measures. Ms. Mary Dehais stated there was some  
115 room for changes and they could work with Planning Staff.  
116

117 Commissioner Gary Bazzano spoke of the need for an additional dumpster near the L-  
118 shaped building. Ms. Mary Dehais stated there was a centralized trash facility with trash  
119 shoots in the building.  
120

121 Commissioner Andres Jimenez-Franck asked about the displacement of current  
122 residents. Ms. Emily Wolfe, Executive Director of Sheldon Charter Oak, stated they  
123 were working with current residents on a temporary relocation plan. She stated they  
124 wanted to keep the new units generally affordable and have some Section 8 designated  
125 units, and any current resident in good standing would be welcome in the new units.  
126

127 Public Comment was opened. Mr. Jack Hale, member of the Tree Advisory  
128 Commissioner, stated there was more room to put large caliber tree plantings on the  
129 driveways, Southeast corner, and the street frontage along Ayala Lane. Mr. Jack Hale  
130 also stated his willingness to work with the Applicant and Commission to increase the  
131 tree canopy in the area.  
132

133 Ms. Donna Williams, nearby property owner, stated the area already had enormous  
134 traffic, noise issues, and the current trash receptacles were often overflowing.

135  
136 Ms. Alyssa Peterson, Hartford resident, stated the current density and not the proposed  
137 increase in density would be better, because there were already traffic issues in the area.

138  
139 Ms. Mary Dehais, stated they had worked with the NRZ to devise the master plan and  
140 the increase in density aimed to enliven the area.

141  
142 The public comment was closed.

143  
144 Commissioners entered deliberation on the application and proposed amendments to the  
145 draft resolution conditions. Commissioner Gary Bazzano made a **MOTION** to approve  
146 the Special Permit as amended, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Jonathan Harding. The  
147 resolution was approved with a vote of **7-0**.

148  
149  
150 **CITY OF HARTFORD**  
151 **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION**  
152 **99 VAN BLOCK AVENUE**  
153 **SPECIAL PERMIT PER SECTION 1.3.4 FOR A MASTER PLAN PURSUANT TO**  
154 **SECTION 5.1.2.A**

155  
156 **Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application and  
157 attached documents regarding the request for a special permit per Section 1.3.4 for a  
158 master plan pursuant to Section 5.1.2.A; and

159  
160 **Whereas,** The zoning district assigned to the subject property is NX-1, Neighborhood Mix  
161 with the Campus Overlay; and

162  
163 **Whereas,** The City of Hartford Zoning Regulations (the Regulations) permit that within the  
164 NX-1 district with the Campus Overlay, master plans may be approved by the  
165 Planning & Zoning Commission via the Special Permit process; and

166  
167 **Whereas,** The proposed master plan is of a design that represents a significant improvement  
168 over the existing use; and

169  
170 **Whereas,** The proposed master plan shows a well-connected network of pedestrian paths; and

171  
172 **Whereas,** The uses proposed are consistent with the zoning district; and

173  
174 **Whereas,** The overall plan is consistent with the Regulations and the Plan of Conservation &  
175 Development; and

176 **Whereas,** The development scale and type proposed is consistent with the zoning district and  
177 the future land use assigned to the property (medium density residential 3-6 stories);  
178 and

179  
180 **Whereas,** The pedestrian circulation network could be improved by allowing for a primary  
181 pathway network that is more accessible to persons with disabilities, families and  
182 children; and

183  
184 **Whereas,** The proposed automobile and bicycle facilities are sufficient but could be improved  
185 to provide a more walkable, bike friendly environment; and

186  
187 **Whereas,** The proposed adjusted build-to line along Van Block Avenue is necessary because  
188 of a 22' MDC easement in that area; and

189  
190 **Whereas,** The additional principal entrances on buildings facing public streets are supportive  
191 of a walkable, pedestrian oriented development as required by Ch.5 of the  
192 Regulations; and

193  
194 Now therefore Be It

195  
196 **Resolved,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby **approves** the request  
197 for a special permit per Section 1.3.4 for a master plan pursuant to Section 5.1.2.A  
198 subject to the following conditions:

- 199 1. An 8' wide primary paths- on **Aisle A** to accommodate all users should be  
200 designated on the plan that connects internal uses to external destinations (Colt Park,  
201 transit facilities, the nearby school);
- 202 2. Bicycle parking and on-street facilities should be considered and shown in the  
203 master plan;
- 204 3. Where feasible a continuous tree canopy should be provided over all pedestrian  
205 paths;
- 206 4. A crosswalk from east to west across the drive aisle intersection on the north of  
207 the site shall be provided;
- 208 5. The addition of raised crosswalks at some intersections to ensure slower car  
209 movements;
- 210 6. The drive aisle connecting Luis Ayala Lane and Van Block Avenue include  
211 design requirements consistent with Ch.9 of the Regulations such as traditional street  
212 lights, a landscape strip between sidewalk and street parking and sharrows or  
213 narrowed lanes;
- 214 7. Bicycle facilities shall be included in the plan;
- 215 8. The setback be adjusted on either the north or south side of the specified drive  
216 aisle to create some internal variation and sense of place;
- 217 9. That the applicant consider possible recreational uses for the open field and if  
218 necessary adjust the layout to better facilitate those uses.

219 **10. Additional bump outs should be added approximately every four parallel**  
220 **parking spaces.**

221 **11. The dumpster enclosure in the Northwest corner should be moved to the**  
222 **East to allow for more sufficient tree planting around the enclosure.**

223  
224 Be It Further,

225  
226 **Resolved,** This 13<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021.

- 227  
228 c. **884 Main St** – Special Permit for Downtown Signage. Owner: LAZ Temple, LLC;  
229 Applicant: ARTfx Signs c/o Lynda Laureano. Open Hearing Deadline: August 26, 2021.

230  
231 Director Aimee Chambers presented the staff report and answered Commissioner’s  
232 questions on the temporary sign display limits.

233  
234 Ms. Lynda Laureano was present on behalf of the applicant and stated that the banners  
235 were made of a high-quality canvas material and the proposed projecting sign would be  
236 refaced once the tenant space was filled.

237  
238 Public Comment was opened and there were no comments or testimony from the public.

239  
240 Commissioners deliberated and proposed amendments to the draft resolution.  
241 Commissioner Gary Bazzano made a **MOTION** to approve the Special Permit  
242 resolution as amended, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Jonathan Harding. The  
243 resolution was approved with a vote of **7-0**.

244  
245 **CITY OF HARTFORD**  
246 **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION**  
247 **884 MAIN STREET**  
248 **SPECIAL PERMIT FOR DOWNTOWN SIGNAGE**  
249

250 **Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application and  
251 attached documents regarding the request for a special permit per Section 8.1.3.E of  
252 the Zoning Regulations for downtown signage; and

253  
254 **Whereas,** The applicant has proposed four (4) temporary banner signs, two (2) window signs  
255 and two (2) projecting signs; and

256  
257 **Whereas,** The Historic Preservation Commission approved the proposed signage at their May  
258 19, 2021 meeting with three conditions, that: the banner signage be properly  
259 maintained and replaced if edges become tattered, the sign face fades from exposure,  
260 or is otherwise damaged; the attachment of all signage to the façade shall be through  
261 mortar instead of masonry wherever possible; and, the two existing signs are to be  
262 removed; and

263 **Whereas,** The subject property is located in the DT-1 district and occupied by a downtown  
264 storefront type building that occupies the entire block from Main Street to Market  
265 Street down Temple Street; and  
266

267 **Whereas,** The proposed signage does meet all the requirements of Ch.8 of the Zoning  
268 Regulations; and  
269

270 **Whereas,** The proposed signage will increase the total sign area for the site by a significant  
271 amount, however, the total sign area used will still only be approximately 50% of the  
272 total sign area allowed on the building; and  
273

274 **Whereas,** The considerable maximum amount of sign area allotted to the downtown building  
275 indicates that the regulations intended for signage to be flexible in the downtown  
276 area; and  
277

278 **Whereas,** Section 8.1.3.E was adopted specifically to allow for deviations from the sign  
279 standards for signage in the DT districts; and  
280

281 Now therefore Be It  
282

283 **Resolved,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby **approves** the request  
284 for a special permit per Section 8.1.3.E of the Zoning Regulations for downtown  
285 signage subject to the following conditions:

- 286 1. The temporary banner signs shall be removed once the advertised residential use  
287 reaches 85% occupancy **or after the passing of two years, whichever comes first;**  
288 and  
289 2. The temporary window signs shall be removed once the subject storefront space is  
290 occupied by a tenant and any subsequent window signs shall **be required to obtain**  
291 **a permit** at that time;  
292 **3. The banners shall be replaced should they fall into disrepair without having**  
293 **the effect of extending the current conditions.**

294  
295 Be It Further,  
296

297 **Resolved,** This 13th day of July, 2021.  
298

299 **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

- 300 a. **8-24 Review, Referral from Court of Common Council** – Item #2 on Court of  
301 Common Council Agenda June 14, 2021, to authorize the sale of a blighted property  
302 at 213-215 Lawrence Street to Mr. Aaron Gill of Wolverine Property, LLC.  
303

304 Commissioner Aaron Gill recused himself from the discussion. Chair Josye Utick  
305 seated Commissioner Guy Neumann for the review.  
306

307 Director Aimee Chambers presented the staff report and letters of support from the  
308 Frog Hollow NRZ, SINA, and various surrounding property owners and residents, as  
309 well as a letter of protest from Ms. Alyssa Peterson.  
310

311 Commissioner David McKinley made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the resolution as  
312 presented by staff, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Guy Neumann. The resolution  
313 passed with a vote of **7-0**.  
314

315 **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**  
316 **8-24 REFERRAL FROM THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL**  
317 **RESOLUTION**

318 **Transfer of 213-215 Lawrence Street to Aaron Gill, Wolverine Property LLC**  
319 **July 13, 2021**  
320

321 **Whereas,** The Planning & Zoning Commission (“Commission”) received a referral and request  
322 for a report from the Court of Common Council (“Council”) regarding a  
323 Communication from Mayor Bronin, with accompanying resolution which would  
324 authorize the transfer of 213-215 Lawrence Street to Aaron Gill, Wolverine  
325 Property, LLC (hereinafter “Property”):  
326

327 **Whereas,** Wolverine Property LLC submitted a proposal to rehabilitate the existing structure  
328 for use as an owner occupied three-family dwelling; and  
329

330 **Whereas,** There is no current or future municipal use for the Properties; and  
331

332 **Whereas,** The Plan of Conservation and Development, entitled “Hartford City Plan” adopted  
333 May 12, 2020, recommends the following action items be completed in order to  
334 make the City’s economy more prosperous and community more equitable:  
335 o Accelerate blight remediation and get properties in the hands of caring owners.  
336 o Revive vacant, blighted properties for new occupancy will improve property  
337 values and quality of life within neighborhoods.  
338

339 **Whereas,** The Commission finds that the proposed transfer of the property is consistent with  
340 the comprehensive plan; **Now Therefore Be It**  
341

342 **Resolved,** *That* the City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby recommends  
343 that the Court of Common Council approve the transfer of the property, subject to  
344 the following:

345 1. The property shall be rehabilitated in accordance with the City of Hartford’s  
346 Guidelines for Renovations and Additions to Historic Buildings.  
347

348 b. **SB 1201 Discussion** – An Act Concerning Responsible and Equitable Regulation of  
349 Adult-Use Cannabis.  
350

351 Director Aimee Chambers requested comments and input from Commissioners on  
352 how to address cannabis uses in the Zoning Regulations. Director Aimee Chambers  
353 read an overview of the Senate Bill, stating that a municipality must hold a  
354 referendum on whether to allow certain cannabis sales if at least 10% of its electors'  
355 petition for such a vote at least 60 days before a regular election. Specifically, these  
356 votes may determine whether to (1) allow the sale of adult-use marijuana in the  
357 municipality or (2) the sale of adult-use marijuana in one or more of the cannabis  
358 establishment license types. The bill allows municipalities to amend their zoning  
359 regulations or local ordinances to take the following actions regarding cannabis  
360 establishments:

- 361 1. Prohibit them from opening;
- 362 2. Reasonably restrict their hours or signage;
- 363 3. Restrict their proximity to religious institutions, schools, charitable  
364 institutions, hospitals, veterans' homes, or certain military establishments.

365  
366 Until June 30, 2024, municipalities are prohibited from granting zoning approval for  
367 more retailers or micro-cultivators than a number that would allow for one retailer  
368 and one micro-cultivator for every 25,000 municipal residents. The bill requires a  
369 special permit or other affirmative approval for any retailer or micro-cultivator  
370 seeking to be located within a municipality. The purpose of the special permit or  
371 other affirmative approval is not to require a public meeting or any other steps or  
372 procedures than would otherwise be required under a municipality's zoning  
373 ordinance, but rather to ensure that no more retailers or micro-cultivators are granted  
374 zoning approval than the number allowable under the legislation.

375  
376 Director Aimee Chambers stated that the Commission needed to consider all uses  
377 (retail, grow, eating) and if they would be grouped together or separately.

378  
379 Commissioner Guy Neumann stated that the bill would allow for 5 or 6 retailers or  
380 micro-cultivators in the City. Attorney Rich Vassallo stated that the State Legislature  
381 had not determined if people can consume on site, and that the restrictions  
382 referenced in the bill included limits to signage and seeing product from the exterior.

383  
384 Commissioner Andres-Jimenez Franck stated that a cannabis retailer could be a  
385 similar use to a liquor store.

386  
387 Commissioner David McKinley asked if the Commission was able to establish a  
388 moratorium until they are able to discuss further, and about the timeline in general.  
389 He stated that retail should be allowed in most places that currently allow retail uses,  
390 and cultivation uses could be comparable to beer brewing.

391  
392 Commissioner Aaron Gill stated the bill had a strong social equity component,  
393 which targeted cities like Hartford. He stated he was hesitant to establish a

394 moratorium, because residents should be allowed to have an early start to a  
395 successful business.

396  
397 Commissioner Jonathan Harding stated the legislature was encouraging affirmative  
398 permitting where the state would control the licensing aspect, and the City could  
399 indicate if a location was allowable.

400  
401 Director Aimee Chambers stated the Commission could allow the uses by Special  
402 Permit in certain zoning districts, and that there was already interest in some grow  
403 facilities in the City. She shared the State was opening the grow facility permitting in  
404 September, and the retail permitting would be open in 2022. She noted the current  
405 Zoning Regulations limited medical marijuana facilities to 20,000sf, which would be  
406 small for a potential grow facility.

407  
408 Commissioner Guy Neumann stated that Hartford could be a leader in the state, and  
409 the Commission should consider locations and have some guidance around noise,  
410 sound, and smell.

411  
412 Commissioner David McKinley stated that the locations should be spread out across  
413 the City, but did not believe it should be treated as a problematic use, like a Liquor  
414 Store. He shared his experience in Provincetown, MA, where a retail cannabis store  
415 was located among many other retail uses.

416  
417 Commissioner Guy Neumann stated that there should be some rules governing  
418 where retailers and grow uses could be established. He asked if they could get input  
419 from the neighborhoods on the proposed amendments.

420  
421 Director Aimee Chambers stated it would be a proposed text amendment that would  
422 at minimum have a Public Hearing, but additional outreach could be done to get  
423 them at the Public Hearing and bring the proposed language to the NRZ meetings.

424  
425 Commissioner Guy Neumann stated that with at least five potential licenses allowed  
426 in the City, they could possibly focus on the micro-cultivation applications first.

427  
428 Commissioner Andres Jimenez-Franck asked if staff could research other similar  
429 Cites or States' codes. Director Aimee Chambers said staff could do some research  
430 and they would need to coordinate with City Council as well who will have  
431 comments.

432  
433 Chair Josye Utick stated that cannabis micro-cultivation facilities could be a good  
434 driver of local employment, and they could propose a rigid overlay for cannabis  
435 sales similar to liquor sale uses.

436

437 Commissioner Aaron Gill stated that perhaps they should not limit the physical  
438 space allowance for micro-cultivators.

439  
440 Commissioner Gary Bazzano stated that retail cannabis could closely resemble a  
441 coffee shop, adult establishment, or a liquor store use, and micro-cultivators could  
442 resemble commercial or manufacturing uses, or they could not resemble any current  
443 use in the regulations.

444  
445 Director Aimee Chambers asked Commissioners if the retail and micro-cultivator  
446 uses should be thought about separately, because some micro-cultivators could also  
447 have retail.

448  
449 Commissioner Jonathan Harding asked if they should address micro-cultivators first  
450 because Industrial or Commercial mix zones could be less controversial, and then  
451 address retail uses.

452  
453 Director Aimee Chambers stated the Commission could keep the discussion on the  
454 agenda going forward to discuss new items.

455  
456 c. **Land Use Legislative Changes**

457  
458 Director Aimee Chambers reviewed some of the Land Use Changes including the  
459 need to remove the minimum unit size from the Zoning Regulations [Section 3.3.1  
460 needs to be modified for the presence of microunits, and Section 4.1.2.K needs to be  
461 removed].

462  
463 **V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

464 a. **Plan Review Numbers for June**

465 Director Aimee Chambers reviewed the Plan Review and Zoning Enforcement numbers  
466 for June and an overview of FY2021 Plan Review numbers.

467  
468 Director Aimee Chambers provided staffing updates including current openings for a  
469 New Zoning Enforcement Officer, replacement for Sandy Fry's Project Manager  
470 position, and the closing of a Senior Planner and Junior Planner position, which had not  
471 yet been hired. New staff included Aaron Borngraber, Historic Preservation Senior  
472 Planner, and Jane Tkach, temporary staff to assist with Sandy's departure.

473  
474 **VI. CHAIR'S REPORT**

475 Chair Josye Utick is working with Mr. Jack Hale on proposed Text Amendments regarding  
476 Tree requirements, with the goal of wrapping up the updates by the end of the year.

477  
478 **VII. Approval of Minutes**

479 a. June 22, 2021 – APPROVED  
480

481  
482 **Regular Meeting of the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission**  
483 **VIII. Applications Received**  
484 \*Indicates the official Date of Receipt for an application and start of the Public Hearing  
485 Timeline  
486 a. **1130 Maple Ave., Goodwin Park Golf Course** - Inland Wetlands and  
487 Watercourses Permit to conduct regulated activity within wetlands, watercourse and  
488 upland review area related to installation of a new irrigation system, including  
489 removal/abandonment of the existing system at the golf course. Property Owner:  
490 City of Hartford; Applicant: Frank Dellaripa, City Engineer. Open Hearing  
491 Deadline: September 16, 2021.  
492  
493 **IX. ADJOURNMENT**  
494 Commissioner Gary Bazzano made a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting, **SECONDED** by  
495 Commissioner David McKinley and the meeting was adjourned at 10:06 p.m.  
496  
497 **Respectfully Submitted by:**  
498 **Paige Berschet, Administrative Assistant**