

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **ZONING MAP AMENDMENT.** Petition for Amendment of the Zoning Map (grid #13) to change a portion of land known as 319 Peck Street (M/B/P 169-0817-03400), 499 Blatchley Avenue (M/B/P 169-0817-03401), and M/B/P 169-0817-03403 from Heavy Industry (IH) to Light Industry (IL). (Law Offices of Yolen and Perzin, LLC)

REPORT: 1530-08

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND

The applicant is proposing to amend the Zoning Map designation of the above referenced properties. The proposal would result in the removal of these properties (comprising nearly 6 acres in area) from a larger existing Heavy Industry (IH) District of approximately 10 acres in area and placing them in a new acre Light Industry (IL) District. The entire existing ten acre IH District, located in a north central portion of Fair Haven was once the site of uses and structures either directly or indirectly associated with the A. C. Gilbert toy manufacturing company. At present the IH District is bordered on the north by Interstate 91, to the east by a neighborhood commercial district located along upper Ferry Street and to the south by a residential area comprised primarily of multifamily dwellings on fairly small lots.

PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was held on May 17, 2017. A transcript of the hearing, CPC meeting 1530, is available from City Plan Department.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Over the past 30 years the industrial use of this property has been largely supplanted by a series of arts-based uses, i.e. gallery and work space, dance and music schools as well as other similar uses. Many of these uses obtained building permits and zoning sign offs under circumstances that did not always appear to sufficiently relate to the Zoning Ordinance. In consequence it has become difficult to expand, replace or complement these uses on these properties. It has also become increasingly evident over the same period of time that the relatively small area of the IH District, its adjacency to residential and General Commercial Districts and its isolation from other industrial areas have made it impractical for most heavy industrial uses.

As evidenced by the above referenced history these properties have however become attractive for other uses that operate in a manner that eliminate most of the features of industrial use that can negatively impact a nearby residential neighborhood but which can actually contribute substantially to neighborhood character and identity. Due in large part to recent changes to the Zoning Ordinance the proposed change to IL would allow a much broader range of commercial uses, including arts based activities, light industrial use, some retail and even residential uses. It is the view of the Commission that all of these uses can be conducted in a manner that will actually be of benefit to the surrounding area. In permitting all of these uses it also makes it much more likely that existing structures will remain, thereby reinforcing the sense of physical and structural stability that is so important to neighborhood livability.

The Commission is concerned however about the remaining 4+ acres that will remain in the IH District and recommends that staff pursue efforts to incorporate this area into either this newly created district, an adjacent RM-2 District or even possibly a nearby BA District.

In terms of the New Haven Vision 2025 this proposal is essentially an indirect realization of the document's directive to "Develop new standards for the proposed industrial mixed use areas..." The City has in fact implemented such standards and this applicant is now attempting to apply those standards in the manner intended by NHV 2025.

SECTION 64(d)(2)c OF THE NEW HAVEN ZONING ORDINANCE

Section 64(d)(2) requires that the City Plan Commission take into consideration in evaluating any amendment to the Zoning Map:

a. 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;

As indicated, this proposed change is clearly appropriate in view of changes that have taken place in New Haven concerning the viability of heavy industrial uses, particularly in adjacency to residential areas.

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

As above, examination of recent land-use history in this area clearly indicates the appropriateness of the present course of action.

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.

The proposed Change will result in a 6 acre IL District. The existing IH District reduced to 4 acres in area.

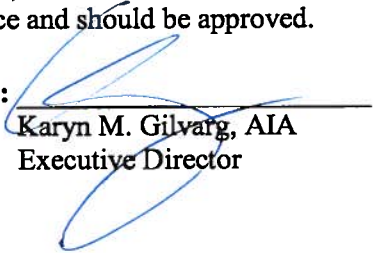
SECTIONS(S) 181 and 182 OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN

The City Plan Commission finds that, based on submitted information the proposed map amendment comply with Sections 181 and 182 of the Charter of the City of New Haven in that it is (i) uniform for each class of buildings or structures, (ii) made in accordance with the comprehensive plan, (iii) designed to lessen congestion in the streets, secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers, promote health and the general welfare, provide adequate light and air, prevent the overcrowding of land, avoid undue concentration of population, facilitate the adequate provisions for transportation, water, sewerage, parks and other public requirements, and (iv) made with reasonable consideration as to the character of the proposed IL District and its peculiar suitability for particular uses and with a view to conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout the City

FINDINGS AND ADVICE

Based on all of the above it is the recommendation of the Commission that the proposed map amendment is in full compliance with the standards and requirements of Section(s) 181 and 182 of the Charter of the City of New Haven and Section 62(d)(2) of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance and should be approved.

ADOPTED: May 17, 2017
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: 
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director