

Dear Richard A. Moccia, Mayor
Members of the Norwalk Parking Authority
Members of the Common Council
Members of the Zoning Commission
Norwalk Redevelopment Agency

February 26, 2013

While I can't attend the February 26th meeting of the Parking Authority, I noted in today's newspaper that the Norwalk Parking Authority intends to raise all-day parking rates at the North Water Street Lot, Haviland Deck, Webster Lot and The Maritime Garage are proposed to go from \$7 to \$8.

The fines for parking violations are proposed to increase from \$30 to \$40 for parking more than 12 inches from a curb, or leaving a car unattended in a no-parking area. Tickets for double parking, parking in a fire lane, parking within 10 feet of a fire hydrant or other "egregious violations" would increase from \$50 to \$60 under the proposal.

The problem with these increases, stems from the problem with the annual increase in the parking authority budget: a \$5.4 million budget — up 2.8 percent.

The continued rate hikes, year after year, and the aggressive enforcement of parking violations throughout the city continue the perception that Norwalk does not value its tourists or visitors when they come to SONO and dine, entertain themselves or shop.

The recent parking study revealed two things, there is an over capacity of parking spaces, and the parking rates are not tied to economic demand, but are arbitrarily set by the the budget prepared by the Authority. Instead of seeing whatever inflationary increases held to the outsourced vendor, the increases are being passed through to the parkers without any regard to the economic impact those pricing policies have on the downtown itself.

SONO's economy remains fragile. It too has stalled development, high turnover of tenants and challenges due to the proximity to some of our more economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and social services. This is simply the wrong direction in policy.

From a zoning standpoint, the burden being placed on development to build on-site parking is counterintuitive to the need to maximize parking patrons at our municipal lots. The removal of fee-in-lieu of parking generated an immediate impact in the ability of property owners to lease space. We must continue in this direction of having zoning remove its regulatory minimum requirements of any on-site parking.

From an economic development standpoint, Norwalk will continue to compete against the vibrant downtown development we are seeing in our neighboring communities. Norwalk does not economically support its world class restaurants alone. We need people from Wilton, Weston, Westport, New Canaan, Stamford and Darien to come to Norwalk. SONO has not yet achieved a clean, safe and friendly appearance, as cited in

numerous economic feasibility studies conducted over the past several years. Sidewalks, potholes, crosswalks, trees, lighting and facades are all part of the solution, yet no coordination in city policy appears to take place.

I am against the rate increase outlined in the first paragraph as well as the enforcement violation increases mentioned. The Authority should go back to the drawing board, reduce its overall budget, and contribute to the economic vitality of the downtown instead of feeding its own meter and the expense of the local businesses who bought into the idea that SONO was a competitive destination downtown.

Regards,

Jackie Lightfield
chief problem solver

norwalk 2.0

FACES of Norwalk Project:

The project goal is to create a series of arts events and permanent street exhibit that speaks to the historic economic vibrancy of downtown Norwalk and catalyzes an artistic hub within the district. Through an inaugural year of programming in addition to site specific history engagement, Norwalk 2.0 plans to include a series of pop-up arts and retail experiences that place creative expression into the heart of the district and help forge ties from the new businesses located in the retail area with the larger community and its historical roots.

For the past two years Norwalk 2.0 has laid the groundwork for the initiative by building a strong alliance between the Norwalk Preservation Trust, the Norwalk Historical Society and the Norwalk Historical Commission, the City of Norwalk and the property owners so that the story of Norwalk's historic downtown industries and businesses are represented within context of a historic district. In 2009, the State of Connecticut formally recognized the area as a historic district. We have successfully implemented this program in SONO, and look forward to help catalyze economic activity on Wall Street.

In the summer of 2011, Norwalk 2.0 conducted a city-wide survey to assess the concerns of both residents, visitors and businesses. Findings from the survey concluded that there was strong support for efforts to revitalize Norwalk's historic downtown. In meeting with stakeholders and policy makers, support for the revitalization of downtown was confirmed.

The first phase of this project is to help define the district through an innovative program called: FACES of Norwalk: A Mural Arts Trail, which represents a collaboration of heritage and cultural organizations as well as property owners.

In reviewing the history of the district, opportunities exist to tell the story of the industrial roots of Norwalk via interpretative installations that will also connect City Hall to the Norwalk Public Library. We envision that interactive wayfinding posts can contribute to the branding of the district that is both permanent and innovative. These "wayfinding" outposts serve to promote the downtown as a historic hub and lead visitors through the project as a destination that represents the creative vibe in Norwalk. The program also include an on-site map/kiosk and accompanying digital media elements.

As the project progresses, Norwalk 2.0 will work with retail tenants, residential tenants, along with many public officials, participants, community members, and other stakeholders to develop destination events via a series of pop-up exhibits and concerts that bring people to the district. We have successfully implemented these activities in SoNo to much acclaim.

We also will dedicate significant attention to building a culture that embraces creativity as a powerful catalyst for change. For downtown Norwalk to revive, foot traffic and visitor numbers must be increased.

Norwalk 2.0 and partners will bring energies toward building on the positive outcomes of the historic aspects as they develop a year of programming scheduled to begin this fall. In order to ensure the continued momentum of the program as we transition to the opening of the project, we will develop community participation and economic goals. We will draft memos of understanding with our partners, articulating our

respective roles and responsibilities and we will hold a call for community participation to submit detailed proposals for each public event or art installation. We are working with all of our partners to represent all aspects of the heritage trail with particular attention to business retail focus.

A major goal for this project is to implement public support and awareness that engages a wider range of community members and provide rich opportunities to develop relationships with nearby residents who ultimately support the economic activity in the district. To achieve this goal, we will 1) host a series of small community engagement events throughout the initiative, such as lectures and workshops open to neighborhood residents; and 2) develop a large-scale branding effort that include significant community engagement processes. The regular programming of these events and workshops will prepare stakeholders to play a central and visible role in bringing future projects to fruition.

We also plan to commission a documentary filmmaker to create a short documentary on the project that will capture the stories of industrial Norwalk. We plan to use the film to promote the project and also generate further dialogue about this important work as well as serve as an interactive vehicle for telling the story of downtown Norwalk.

Impact

At the individual level, we anticipate that participation in the program will result in: improved access to downtown services; increased feelings of coolness; increased integration into the community; increased knowledge of community history; and increased feelings of neighborhood. At the community level, we believe the program will result in: increased utilization of the downtown and increased commercial activity.

The project has the potential to become an effective and replicable strategy for introducing new retail availability to the area.

Evaluation

During each activity we will initiate data collection by conducting baseline interviews with community residents and businesses in the target zip codes and completing detailed community observations at multiple locations over several occasions. Over time, findings from these interviews and observations will allow us to assess progress towards our community outcomes.

Key Personnel

Jackie Lightfield, Project Manager: As an entrepreneur since 1996, Jackie Lightfield has been a driving force in overseeing Norwalk 2.0's growth. Lightfield served as Chairman of the City of Norwalk's Zoning Commission and Arts Commission prior to co-founding Norwalk 2.0 Lightfield brings extensive experience in managing projects, conducting research, and analyzing policy around a variety of topics within the field of economic development. She will manage all aspects for the duration of the project.

Maribeth Becker, Project Manager: A renowned Norwalk community activist and social change leader, Maribeth Becker co-founded Norwalk 2.0 following a decade of work in Norwalk as a community volunteer. Becker has many years of experience in organizing for the betterment of our communities. She previously served as Vice Chair of the Norwalk Arts Commission and as a lifelong advocate for building teamwork and strategic community partnerships.

Project Partners

Norwalk Preservation Trust: Finding a Future for Our Past

The Norwalk Preservation Trust believes that the buildings around us are an important part of understanding

the history of our community. This heritage is what gives Norwalk its unique character. Norwalk Preservation Trust works with homeowners, businesses, neighborhood groups, and city agencies to preserve that character and retain our visible history.

Norwalk Historical Society: The Norwalk Historical Society was incorporated in 1899 with the purpose of promoting and encouraging historical research in Norwalk. That vision is kept alive today with the re-establishment of the NHS in 1949 and the continued focus on “the research, preservation, and promotion of interest in the history of Norwalk.”

Norwalk Redevelopment Agency: At the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, all of our energies and resources go into enhancing the physical, economic and social environment of the Norwalk community. We work here. We live here. We’re proud of — and know firsthand — Norwalk’s present advantages and future opportunities.

DECD Department of Arts & Culture: The **Office of the Arts** develops and strengthens the arts in Connecticut and makes artistic experiences widely available to residents and visitors. Through its grant programs, the office invests in Connecticut artists and arts organizations and encourages the public’s participation as creators, learners, supporters, and audience members. Through its program and services, the office connects people to the arts and helps to build vital communities across the state.

WINDOW EXHIBIT AGREEMENT

On behalf of YOUR LEGAL ENTITY, thank you for selecting 37 Wall Street as the host location for the window exhibits sponsored by Norwalk 2.0 in collaboration with various artists, associations and entities. The details are confirmed as follows:

- LOCATION:** 37 Wall Street, South Norwalk, CT 06850

- DATES:** Installation March 1, April 1, May 1, June 1
Deinstall March 30, April 20, May 31, June 30

- TIMES:** scheduled mutually

- PROGRAM:** FACES of Norwalk Interactive Mural Arts Trail

- Personnel:** YOUR LEGAL ENTITY will provide access to Norwalk 2.0 for installation of artwork and removal of artwork.

- Other:** Norwalk 2.0 to supply all items for installation of artwork which includes, lighting, hanging hardware and signage. Windows delivered as is/where is and returned in same condition with the exception of agreed upon work that may need to take place from time to time, based on specific exhibit needs.

- Insurance:** Norwalk 2.0 agrees to name YOUR LEGAL ENTITY as additional insured with a certificate of insurance naming same.

- Promotion:** Norwalk 2.0 agrees to include, as appropriate, mention of YOUR LEGAL ENTITY in promotional materials, efforts and announcements: i.e. space provided courtesy of YOUR LEGAL ENTITY.

Property Owner

Date

Norwalk 2.0

Date

EVENT EXHIBIT SPACE AGREEMENT

On behalf of YOUR LEGAL ENTITY, thank you for selecting 37 Wall Street as the host location for the pop up gallery and art events programming sponsored by Norwalk 2.0 in collaboration with various artists, associations and entities. The details are confirmed as follows:

- LOCATION:** 37 Wall Street, South Norwalk, CT 06850
- DATES:** March 15, 2013 through June 30, 2013
- TIMES:** Various events scheduled with varying times.
- EVENT:** Pop Up/Artists Incubator venue
- Personnel:** Event personnel supplied by Norwalk 2.0; YOUR LEGAL ENTITY has issued key to NORWALK 2.0 to be returned on or about July 1, 2013.
- Other:** Norwalk 2.0 to supply show items, and provide own tables, chairs, racks etc for show needs. Space delivered as is/where is and returned in same condition with the exception of agreed upon work that may need to take place from time to time, based on specific event needs. Space will be painted white by Norwalk 2.0 and will not be returned to original state. Electricity will be billed separately.
- Insurance:** Norwalk 2.0 agrees to name YOUR LEGAL ENTITY as additional insured with a certificate of insurance naming same.
- Rental Fee:** PR in lieu of fee; painting of walls in lieu of fee.
- Promotion:** Norwalk 2.0 agrees to include, as appropriate, mention of YOUR LEGAL ENTITY in promotional materials, efforts and announcements: i.e. space provided courtesy of YOUR LEGAL ENTITY.

Have an empty storefront?

Information for Property Owners

Want to lure throngs of the tri-state areas art-loving residents and tourists who visit or work in Norwalk to pop over to your property?

That's the goal with POP City, a non-profit initiative from Norwalk 2.0. Norwalk 2.0 is transforming vacant real estate into new temporary creative spaces where art, startups and creative economy energy fill retail spaces to excitement and additional foot traffic in downtowns.

Starting with three projects in 2008, we have successfully created events and exhibits that have drawn thousands of active visitors to SoNo and Mathews Park. The economic benefit was immediate, more people, more sales, more awareness of the exciting opportunities to create new business ventures in Norwalk. With the support of the Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut Office of the Arts which also receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency (**DECD Office of the Arts**) we have developed a project focusing on Wall Street. Our goal is to expand throughout the Norwalk's central business district, supporting the work of artists and Norwalk's business community at the same time. We need your help to make it happen!

Benefits of Temporarily Donating Space

- Provides an exciting new way to market your vacant property to potential tenants;
- Increases pedestrian traffic to surrounding businesses;
- Showcases vacant retail spaces as attractive sites;
- Your property and your donation will be prominently featured on both the POP City and Norwalk 2.0 web sites;
- Generates economic development in the downtown through increased traffic to area stores and restaurants;
- Helps create good will that the public and media will embrace;
- Your property will be part of an ongoing PR campaign;
- Recognition for your donation in the Norwalk 2.0 newsletter; (distribution 3,000)
- If your property is leased, the temporary exhibit moves out; (10 days notice)

Norwalk 2.0 will work with you to set the guidelines for your space and find an appropriate match

to showcase your space throughout the exhibit.

All Norwalk businesses are eligible to participate.

Your generosity is the cornerstone of this program and our first priority is to safeguard your interests by returning your property in the same or better condition than received.

Learn more about why Pop-City is too good an opportunity to pass up.

Norwalk 2.0 is part of a growing national movement that leverages technology to increase social engagement in and participation in communities. **Gov 2.0**, **Code for America** and **Startup America** all focus on delivering tech tools to local organizations and communities to enable better and more efficient ways of making communities better.

Becker and Lightfield founded Norwalk 2.0 in the summer of 2010 to address needs in Norwalk after extensive work as civic leaders.

Norwalk 2.0's mission is to engage residents, businesses and community organizations to work together and create an authentic, creative, economically diverse and sustainable future.

For more information visit the website: www.norwalk2.org

Please contact:

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