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June 17, 2005  
The Norwalk Citizen-News

## Consultant Named for Main/Westport Avenue Study

Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc., is recommended by Mayor Alex Knopp and Planning Commission Chairman Walter Briggs to prepare land-use recommendations for the Main Avenue and Westport Avenue Corridor Area

Knopp also has appointed a Main Avenue and Westport Avenue Corridor Area Advisory Committee to work with the selected consultants on the development of the plan.....

Knopp will be a co-chairman of the advisory committee along with Planning Commission member Fran DiMeglio. The committee also includes: Jackie Lightfield, a Zoning Commission member; Mark Palmer, the deputy police chief; Laurel Lindstrom, the president of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association; Jerry Priice, the managing partner of Above & Beyond Realty; Bill Andriopoulos of Andriopoulos Design Associates; Kristina Testa-Buzzee, a Main Avenue resident; Joseph Tamburri, a Main Avenue area resident and customer relations manager for the South Norwalk Electric Works; Joane Jackson, a member of the Save Cranbury Association; and Pat Spinola, a County Street resident...

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June 16, 2005  
The Hour

## Association warns of increased traffic flow

By Jeanne Hoff  
Staff Writer

NORWALK -- Members of Birchwood and Terra Nova Homeowner's Association, the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association, and others who would be affected by a 235-unit residential development on the Pepperidge Farm property urged the Zoning Commission to consider how the development would exacerbate traffic flow in the area.

David Waters, an attorney representing FF Realty, disclosed proposed site plans for the development at 595 Westport Avenue.

Those in attendance.....

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June 16, 2005  
The Advocate

## Neighbors speak against plans for Pepperidge site

By John Nickerson  
Staff Writer

NORWALK -- A day after a proposed luxury condominium project on the Pepperidge Farm site won conditional Conservation Commission approval, about 70 people raised concerns about traffic and land excavation last night at a Zoning Commission hearing.

While concerns centered on added traffic the 235-unit complex could bring to Westport Avenue and the excavation that would be necessary, supporters said it would add to the city's diversity of housing.

Zoning commissioners are not expected to decide on whether to grant zoning approval until July 20 or later, Planning and Zoning Director Michael Greene said.

The proposal to build condos on the site of the old bakery at 595 Westport Ave. and add about 33,000 square feet to an existing office building on the property along the Norwalk-Westport border is being pushed by FF Realty LLC.

The firm was set up by Fairfield Residential LLC, which owns an interest in or manages more than 54,000 apartment units in 15 states.

Pepperidge Farm moved its baking operations to Bloomfield more than a year ago, while keeping its corporate headquarters in a building next door to the bakery. Pepperidge Farm set up a bakery at the site in 1947.

Land use attorney David Waters, who represents FF Realty, said the 15.7-acre parcel where the office addition and condo complex would go could legally accept a total of 357 residential units and an additional 420,000 square feet of office space other than what FF Realty is proposing.

Pepperidge Farms owns an additional 7.1 acres at the site which could become a single-family home development in the future. No application has been made for that property.

"We are significantly below what could be on this site," Waters said.

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June 3, 2005  
The Advocate

## Tour highlights plan for harbor

By John Nickerson  
Staff Writer

NORWALK -- City officials, developers and civic leaders took to the water yesterday evening for a boat tour showcasing a new plan for much of Norwalk Harbor. Many hope

the plan will balance recreational, economic and environmental demands there for the next 10 to 15 years.

Aboard the Norwalk Seaport Association's ferry boat, G.W. Tyler, Mayor Alex Knopp remembered taking a similar voyage nearly two years ago when he announced there were too few restrictions on the books against unwanted waterfront developments.

Calling the harbor the city's "finest natural resource," he vowed to hire an outside consultant to draw up a guide for future development along both sides of the harbor from Chapel Street in central Norwalk down to the South Norwalk Boat Club on Mack Street.

The resulting Mid-Harbor Planning Study, which could be incorporated into the city's master plan by the Common Council sometime this summer, seeks to encourage water-dependent uses such as marine businesses and restaurants, protect harborside neighborhoods, extend waterfront walking trails and renew wetland areas by removing invasive weeds and replacing them with native plants.

Following a public hearing last night in which two people rose to speak about the plan about an hour after the G.W. Tyler disembarked its passengers, the council's Planning Committee decided to take a closer look at the plan before passing it along to the full council for final approval.

Following the meeting, Planning Committee Chairman Matthew Miklave said: "It is a significant study and it deserves significant attention."

The committee will schedule the planning study's authors, Cambridge, Mass.-based Chan Krieger & Assoc., for a presentation on July 7. At that point the committee should be able to have its questions about the plan answered, Miklave said.

Speaking to the committee last night, East Norwalk Neighborhood Association President Laurel Lindstrom said she thought the plan was "excellent."

But she wasn't sure if it would prevent excessive development that would overwhelm nearby neighborhoods. The second and final public speaker last night, Councilman William Krummel, said he supported the plan if it would preserve public access to the waterfront.

During the cruise last night, Planning Director Michael Greene said the plan, if adopted, will set the tone for future development so long as the Zoning Commission adopts supporting regulations.

Acknowledging that the market place will play a significant role in development along the water, Greene said the plan will have an effect on what gets put there.

Knopp pointed out that the city has the ability to discourage projects that are not compatible with the Mid-Harbor Plan. Last month the \$50,000, 69-page plan was approved by the Planning Commission after more than eight months of review by the panel and city planners.

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May 14, 2005

The Hour

## **Volunteers get thank-you for cleanup**

### **Reception honors volunteers**

By JEANNE HOFF *Hour Staff Writer* NORWALK -- More than 50 people attended a thank-you reception Friday to honor of the men and women who gave of their time and labors during the citywide cleanup April 30. On that day, roughly 38 associations participated in refurbishing the streets of Norwalk as part of the Mayor Alex Knopp's initiative to sweep the streets of more than just loiterers "This was the first event of the mayor's anti-litter task force," said Alanna C. Kabel, the director of marketing and business development for the city. "We had over 400 people involved in this event, and we collected over 380 bags of trash, which amounts to about 19 tons of debris." In addition to the various associations that participated directly, 24 nonprofit organizations and corporations donated gloves, trash bins, trucks and other items to the effort. Volunteers included groups from Norwalk, Briggs and Brien McMahan high schools, neighborhood associations, the Norwalk River Watershed Association members of Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now's alternative-to-incarceration program, Raymond Funeral Home, Department of Public Works and the New Canaan Rowing club, among others. Associations were allowed to choose what areas they would clean. Michelle Clarkin and Marlene Eicholz of the Norwalk River Watershed Association said their group chose Oyster Park because of the large amount of debris along the shore line. "We really had our work cut out for us, but there were about 40 to 50 other individuals in the area," Clarkin said. "We filled 100 bags of garbage in two hours. ... There was so much trash right along the shore line -- cups, tires, soda cans. It looked like a lot of material had collected over a 10-year period." During the reception David Shockley, neighborhood improvement coordinator for the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, Kabel and Hal Alvord, director of Public Works, congratulated the participants for a job well done despite adverse weather conditions, which left the garments of many volunteers soiled after hours of gathering debris. "I feel good doing my part to keep my city looking nice," said Beth Siegelbaum of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association. "I live here, and I want my city to look nice. But on the other hand, it's a little frustrating to know people are creating litter that has to be cleaned up, she said. Each participating organization and association received a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the mayor and the city. "It (the cleanup) represents a broad spectrum of the community interested in partnering with the city," Kabel said, "to make Norwalk an even more attractive place to live."

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May 12, 2005

The Advocate

## **Signing off: Billboards at East Norwalk train station set to go**

By Lisa Charnoff *Staff Writer*

NORWALK -- Two large billboards on the embankment next to the East Norwalk railroad station will be gone by the end of July, making way for planned improvements.

Paul Coggin, a Third Taxing District commissioner, said the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which controls the billboards, has agreed to remove them after officials made the request more than a year ago.

It's a victory for residents who thought of them as eyesores and barriers to a much-anticipated revitalization.

"We're very thankful that the MTA worked with the community on this," Coggin said.

In the fall of 2003, the commission, the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association and the East Norwalk Improvement Association asked the MTA to take the signs down. The billboards diminished historical significance, they said, and railroad stations in surrounding towns do not have them.

An MTA representative visited the site in June. Recently the commissioners got a letter from the MTA real-estate department stating the billboards will be removed from the embankment at the east side of East Avenue between Fort Point and Winfield streets by July 31.

The MTA has been leasing the billboards to an advertising company.

"The decision was made in this particular case that (we) would forgo the revenue in order to accommodate the area," MTA spokesman Tom Kelly said.

Kelly said he does not know how much money the MTA earns from the signs.

The taxing district is looking to work with the city to landscape the area, considered historically significant.

Colonial leader Roger Ludlow is said to have bought land from American Indians at what is now Fort Point Street and East Avenue.

Laurel Lindstrom of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association, which wants to revitalize what is considered a gateway to that part of the city, said she is thrilled by the MTA's decision. Many commuters use the station and those exiting northbound see the backs of the large signs, she said.

"Being that it is an area that is kind of a focal point, and being that it is a transportation hub, there's more going on than just billboards," Lindstrom said. "This is really an important location for the neighborhood."

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May 11, 2005

## The Advocate

To the editor:

The East Norwalk Neighborhood Association had a very successful cleanup April 30 when we joined the citywide cleanup day inspired by the Keep America Beautiful campaign.

I want to thank all who participated and helped to make the day a success. Also, a big

thank-you goes to Department of Public Works crews and to others with trucks that they volunteered to help take away all the trash we collected.

At least 25 of our members picked up litter for three to four hours in the areas that the ENNA targeted (Fitch Park, the Andrews Field parking area, lower East Avenue from Interstate 95 down to Seaview Avenue, and under the Stroffolino Bridge along the eastern bank of the Norwalk River next to Constitution Park) as well as several smaller locations that members organized to clean with their neighbors.

The ENNA collected more than 90 bags of trash plus an assortment of other items that had been dumped in our local parks (tires, bicycle, a refrigerator, a clothes washer, construction materials, etc.).

Also, a quick reminder for the public to please keep in mind that all of us can help keep our neighborhoods clean every day by throwing litter in bins and picking up litter when we see it. Keeping our streets, parks and riverbanks clean goes a long way toward creating pride in our community that then makes for a safer and more attractive neighborhood.

Laurel Lindstrom

Norwalk

Via e-mail

The writer is president of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association.

Note: the above letter was also printed in the Hour, on May 3, 2005, under the heading: City cleanup day volunteers deserve pat on the back

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May 2005

The Third Taxing District's Newsletter: Inside Your Third

TTD Commissioners Donate Truck for City-Wide Cleanup

[Click for PDF of newsletter](#)

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May 1, 2005

The Sunday Hour

## **Keeping Norwalk Litter-Free**

Front page photo of East Norwalk Neighborhood Association members cleaning litter in Fitch Park, one of our target cleanup areas for the April 30 Citywide Cleanup Day that was part of the Keep America Beautiful campaign.

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May 1, 2005

The Advocate

## **Brigade battles city's garbage**

**By Alison Damast** *Staff Writer*

NORWALK

...About 25 members of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association dispersed throughout the neighborhood yesterday, filling up more than 50 trash bags as they spruced up East Avenue, Fitch Park and (under) the Stroffolino Bridge. Other volunteers made their way to Andrews Park (Field) and met up with other groups, including several students from Briggs High School who helped remove graffiti from trailers at the park. "by the end of the day, we had accomplished as much as I would have hoped for or more," said Laurel Lindstrom, president of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association. "We really made a difference, considering the poor weather and that people have a lot of other things to do on a Saturday."

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April 7, 2005

The Hour

## **East Ave. plans discussed**

**By JEANNE HOFF** *Hour Staff Writer NORWALK*

Developer Michael DiScala, of M.F. DiScala & Co., and Steven Cecil, plan and design principal of The Cecil Group, met with East Norwalk Neighborhood Association Wednesday to discuss plans for the 142-144 East Ave. development. In addition to the East Avenue development, the two men also addressed the Wall Street Parcel 3 Redevelopment Project.

The audience was composed of members of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association and those interested in either development. The East Avenue development calls for slight refurbishments to the 17,000-square-foot structure, formerly known as the Katharine Gibbs School, so that it can accommodate office space slightly more than 8,000 square feet and house eight rental apartments.

Though the former school will continue to be a two-story structure with office space on the ground level and residential units on the upper level, there will also be two, 3.5-story buildings on the site. Thirty luxury residential apartments will be divided among the latter two buildings. The building will include one- and two-bedroom apartments. Square footage for a one-bedroom unit will start around 900 square feet, and a two bedroom unit is expected to start at 1,300 square feet. The cost of the East Avenue development project is currently unknown, DiScala said.

In regards to the Wall Street Parcel 3 development, DiScala plans on making 16 of the 160 units affordable housing. The proposed plans call for a facelift of the area, which has been hit by three disasters since 1890, developers said. The plans for the \$50 million Wall Street Parcel 3 development seek to restore historic structures, adhere to environmental responsibilities and improve the overall quality of life in the area. Employees at a 500- to 600-square-foot police substation will monitor a parking garage, which will hold more than 200 parking spaces, in addition to surface level parking in other locations.

Two hundred and ninety four parking spaces are included in the design for the area. This figure raised eyebrows of those in attendance, who wondered whether or not the 294 parking spots would be enough in the future.

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April 6, 2005

The Advocate

## Developer plans luxury apartments where former Gibbs College was

By John Nickerson  
Staff Writer

NORWALK -- Condominium and apartment complexes under construction on the east side of the Norwalk River could get a new neighbor.

The former home of Gibbs College at 142 East Ave. may soon be transformed as part of a \$50 million mixed-use development of luxury apartments and offices.

The building's co-owner, Michael DiScala, is scheduled to unveil plans tonight to remodel the two-story rectangular brick and glass building, which until 2003 housed the former secretarial school.

The announcement will be made at a meeting of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association at 8 p.m. at City Hall in room A300.

Project plans call for giving the building a new facade and roof that DiScala said will make the modern structure look like "an old historical building."

The building is located within the East Norwalk Village District.

"When I built the building 31 years ago, it was built to Gibbs' requirements," DiScala said. "We were never really proud of the architecture of the building. Now we have the opportunity to build something that blends in with the historic nature of East Avenue."

Along with altering the appearance of the 17,000-square-foot building, DiScala plans to put six or eight luxury apartments at the top and devote the ground floor to corporate offices.

Two smaller luxury apartment buildings with about 30 apartments would be built on the current parking lot behind the building.

Four of the units will be deemed affordable, meaning that a family earning 80 percent of the state median income of \$82,000 could live there, DiScala said.

His partner in the building is Merritt 7 corporate park developer Albert Phelps.

DiScala, whose development company is located in the renovated 138-year-old Trolley Barn on nearby Wall Street, was chosen in January by the city to redevelop a 4.7-acre parcel north and south of the Wall Street bridge.

That project, estimated to cost about \$50 million, would create 482 private and public parking spaces, 161 residential units, nearly 23,000 square feet of retail space and 6,000 square feet of office space.

Although DiScala's East Avenue project has been informally discussed with city officials, the city's Planning and Zoning Department has not yet received plans.

Like the 57-unit River Way condominium development on Daskams Lane and the 17-unit River Landing development next to 142 East Ave., DiScala's project will include a 15-foot-wide boardwalk for public access. A third residential development on the east bank of the river, consisting of 20 one- and two-bedroom apartments, is nearing completion on Osborne Avenue.

East Norwalk Neighborhood Association President Laurel Lindstrom said she is pleased with the idea of changing the appearance of the building and praised DiScala for proposing it.

"I think that is definitely in his favor. He actually initiated this in the beginning and tried to work it out so whatever his development is will fit in with the village district," Lindstrom said.

DiScala's willingness to unveil his plans in front of the neighborhood association meeting shows that he is trying to be a good neighbor, she said.

"He has always been very open about explaining what he is doing," Lindstrom said.

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April 1, 2005

The Norwalk Citizen-News

## An Opportunity

*-Letter to Editor*

The East Norwalk Neighborhood Association has invited Michael DiScala to present his development plans for the east bank of the Norwalk River. The presentation will take place on Wednesday, April 6 at 8 PM at City Hall in Room A300. Mr. DiScala, and members of his team of consultants, will present plans for the former Katherine Gibbs site, upper Smith Street and the Wall Street area. There will be a question and answer period following the presentation.

Since the plans are still in the formative stage, and have not gone through the final process of public hearings and approvals, this meeting is an excellent opportunity for you to have a say in what the projects will look like once completed.

For more information call 855-7668 or visit the ENNA website at <http://eastnorwalk.org>.

Laurel Lindstrom, President  
East Norwalk Neighborhood Association

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