

Present: **18 Zoom Participants**

The meeting began at 6:30 pm

**Jake Felton of The Bureau of Air Management gave an update on issues presented at the February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, NRZ meeting:**

Jake Felton advised they made a couple of visits to the Stamford South End since the last meeting in February. The most recent visit was 2-weeks ago, and they surveyed several facilities:

1. The 14-acre site O&G aggregate plant on Davenport.
2. The O&G hot mix plant on Canal Street.
3. Rubino Brothers
4. The wastewater treatment plant
5. The transfer station
6. The Vitti indoor rock crushing facility.
7. Spartec

As far as compliance issues:

- The O&G hot mix plant on Canal Street they did document significant drag out on the public roadway. O&G have their own street sweeper but DEEP did talk to O&G and made them aware of the drag out issue. Although the issue has been corrected, DEEP will keep an eye on it and there will be an enforcement response by the agency. They did note some very mild localized odors inherent to the asphalt plant but not nuisance odors. There are many different legal definitions of nuisance odors, so the mild inherent odors don't necessarily rise to the level of nuisance under their regulation.
- The wastewater treatment plant and transportation also had a localized mild odor that are kind of inherent to this type of operation. They do document odor nuisances from time to time at facilities across Connecticut, but the odor must be more under their regulations, need to be more widespread or moderate to significant before it constitutes a nuisance.
- Spartec they didn't document any issues.
- Rubino Brothers No Odors No Smoke

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- The O&G 14-acre site they didn't see any rock crushers on site as there seem to be no activity going on.
- Vitti was enclosed in the building, so they really didn't see any issues. It's possible there could be issues with visible emissions or drag out but none that they saw, and they haven't gotten any complaints about Vitti in a few years.

Jake emphasized that they continue to visit the Stamford South End every few weeks or once a month just to check on the areas that have been subjects of complaints so they can take a proactive approach.

**Question: Terry Adams** asked did you take notice of O&G on Canal Street & the Davenport site that they are not covering the rocks or the dirt?

**Answer (Jake Felton):** Yes, it was noticed, and the Air Bureau needs to talk to the inspector about the piles being uncovered. Although it was noticed that the piles were adequately wetted when they were there. The piles don't necessarily need to be covered under the regulations if the piles are kept adequately wet to prevent fugitive dust and emissions. Jake will ask if any of the piles were covered and follow-up.

**Question:** John Wooten asked are they supposed to clean the street on Davenport leading up to the bridge heading towards Washington Boulevard? You can see in the roundabout where they turn all the dirt leading to the bridge.

**Answer (Jake Felton):** Yes, they are supposed to clean if it's coming from their facility.

**Question:** Sue Halpern inquired about drag out pads that they could put at the exit from the driveway out into the street at Rubino's and O&G to retrieve the dust as it coming out?

**Answer (Jake Felton):** They make grizzlies & gravel pads that are used across the construction industry to control drag out. Never seen any drag out from Rubino it always seems to be from O&G. We will keep an eye on it and follow-up.

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**Dan Panitz of St. Lukes** introduced Randy Valdez from Stewardship Realty who is the senior asset manager of their organization. Randy does a lot of the zoning analysis and deals with the local officials. Dan also introduced Father Andrew Kryzek the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church on East Main Street in Stamford. Father Kryzek mentioned that St. Lukes Chapel property on Woodland Place belongs to St. John's.

Dan Panitz is one of the principals of Stewardship Realty and his organization works in about 14 states, majority of their work in Connecticut. Dan's organization was created to transform church real estate from a liability to an asset, from income drain to income producing. Dan's organization noticed that churches were closing, selling their properties and getting ripped off by development companies performing bad transactions. Dan's organization help churches to build financial sustainability for their ministry through the career development of their assets. As a first step Dan was advised by the Department of Planning and zoning to meet with the South End NRZ for community advisement and to give an idea on what they are thinking.

**Father Kryzek** gave background history of the complex on Pacific Street and Woodland Place:

- Built by St. Johns's Church in the 1890's
- St John's began a mission in the South End in about the 1970's
- The chapel was built in 1890, 1891.
- There are two conjoined buildings on the corner, the parish hall that used to be a rectory. Both Buildings were built together in 1898. The buildings were originally used as a medical clinic for the South End
- Inspirica hold the lease on all the buildings since the middle part of the 1990's for a dollar a year for 100 years.
- The space is 13,000 plus square feet and it's old.
- The buildings have never been fully renovated since they were built
- The building is currently being used by inspirica as a women emergency homeless shelter

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Dan Panitz advised he would like to talk about a proposed property development and present some type of community facility program where the chapel remains, and the perishable old rectory be removed. Dan emphasized that populations are either moving or congregations are aging and there isn't enough money to maintain the buildings. Not enough pledge and plate so the church and the diocese are in a catch-22, what do they do with the property that nobody's using? The property is expensive to maintain, and they must survive. Since the building is on the National Register all external repairs on the property must be consistent with the materials from the original construction. The materials from the original construction are very hard to locate and they are very expensive. There is a lack of funding opportunities to cover the expenses and renovations as there only is a certain pot of money on the city level, the state level and the national level where thousands of churches are going after the same money and it's just not enough money. Dan acknowledges the history of the church but is looking for an opportunity where we could compromise and perhaps talk about demolishing the parish hall and the rectory. Keep the chapel and renovate it for new community facility space i.e. (something for seniors, ambulatory medical). Dan questioned would the community be open to seeing a concept whereby there was a compromise to the demolish the parish hall and the rectory but keep the chapel which is the historic significance in the South End.

**Question (Sue Halpern):** UConn is looking for classroom space and dorm space maybe you can reach out to U-Conn?

**Answer (Dan Panitz):** I have been in contact with UConn and the site is too far from the Stamford campus. The students want to be near the downtown Stamford so they can walk to campus. The purpose of building student housing and passing the new zoning is that UConn Stamford is no longer a commuter school it's where student live and they can walk to class.

**Question (Sue Halpern):** Is there any thought of bringing in some religious services?

**Answer ( Father Kryzek):** I would like to see the chapel remain and be a place of worship to minister the spiritual needs of the people who live in the South End.

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**Question (Sue Halpern):** How about other parishes? Have you reached out?

**Answer (Father Kryzek):** At the moment they have a lease with Inspirica and would like to continue working with Inspirica.

**Question (Sue Halpern):** Doesn't inspirica own those multifamily homes behind the property on Woodland?

**Answer (Dan Panitz):** Yes, they do.

**Question (John Wooten):** Are there a lot of things that are coming down the road that got you guys looking at this issue?

**Answer (Father Kryzek):** Not as far as I know. What is seen on the outside of the building is mostly cosmetic. I don't have cause to believe that inspirica has not been doing anything but keeping up the building according to code and as well as possible.

**Question (John Wooten):** How would you get revenue from community space?

**Answer (Dan Panitz):** Were here to say would you consider us to tear down this portion of the campus and if agreed then they would come back with a massing study and a concept design. The massing study concept design would show a residential building that would be a combination of mixed income affordable and some market rate. The money from that would help renovate St. Lukes chapel to be a more modern community facility. In addition, zoning would require us to have some type of community facility or retail space, that could be a second community facility space funded by the property development. St John would be self-sufficient to provide the community facility space without donations. What would go in the community space would be a discussion with the South End NRZ. Also, there would be a market analysis, but they do what is called a mission analysis to find out what is lacking in the neighborhood.

Dan emphasized to Monika Twal that the goal is to tear down the parish hall and the rectory so they can beautify and keep the chapel in a pristine beautiful setting.

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**Question (Elizabeth McCauley):** Have you spoken with SHIPO?

**Answer (Dan Panitz):** We deal with SHIPO on a constant basis and in fact we work with regulations. We know the regulations pretty good. Many times, SHIPO can't stop a development unless they take public dollars or public permit from a state level. This is not going to happen here as the goal is not to use public dollars.

Lynn Brooks mentioned the number of community spaces within the South End that are not adequately used by the community.

Dan Panitz stated that's going to drive them to research and determine what type of community facility and what type of program to put in the space because they want it to succeed.

Question (Lynn Brooks). Is St John's part of Diocese of Bridgeport?

Answer (Dan Panitz): No. this is St John's. The St John's Basilica is part of Diocese of Bridgeport.

Dan offered to come back to the NRZ to present a concept based on the condition knowing that the two structures (Parish Hall & Rectory) would come down. It was asked that some dates be given to arrange a tour of the buildings. An open invitation was extended to Dan to attend the September, October or November NRZ zoom meetings to present their concept.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm**