

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 Cedar Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

Town Plan and Zoning Commission

To: Town Plan and Zoning Commission
From: Town Planner Craig Minor, AICP
Date: July 1, 2020
Subject: **Petition #23-20: Special Permit (Sec. 3.17.7: Children's Theatre Organization) at 136 Day Street. 136 Day Street LLC, owner; Newington Children's Theatre Company, applicant; Chris DeFrancisco, 255 Beacon Street, Newington CT, contact.**

Description of Petition #23-20:

The Newington Children's Theatre would like to move from their current location on North Mountain Road and into the building at 136 Day Street. A "Children's Theatre Organization" is allowed by special permit in the Industrial Zone.

Staff Comments:

The Newington Children's Theatre intends to move out of their current site completely, and their plan is to make increasing use of the building at 136 Day Street over several years, in three phases. See the narrative submitted with their application for more details.

I have been discussing this with the applicants for several months. I told them that my only concern was whether the new location has enough parking to accommodate their long-range goals. I am satisfied that it does, with some minor changes.

Phase 1 consists of 5,000 s.f. of offices, classrooms, and hallways/utilities. Based on the parking requirements for classrooms and for offices, Phase 1 needs fifteen parking spaces. According to the attached aerial photograph of the front of 136 Day Street there are 3 rows of six parking spaces (I don't think the old site plan that the applicants submitted a snapshot of can be relied upon because it proposes several parking spaces in the Day Street right-of-way. I do not believe the site plan was ever approved by TPZ).

Phase 2 adds another 3,000 s.f. of shop rooms (screen, dressing, and costume) and a "black box" theater with no formal stage and no fixed seating. The parking requirement for a theater with no fixed seating is 1 space per 300 s.f., and for shop rooms I recommend using the "manufacturing" requirement which is approximately 1 space per 300 s.f. So, the amount of parking needed for Phase 2 is ten spaces. According to the attached aerial photograph there is enough room for ten parking spaces in the rear of the building, but the spaces would need to be painted.

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Phase 3 is the net addition of 3,000 s.f. for a “Proscenium Theatre” with a 51’ x 34’ stage and 250 seats of fixed seating. I say “net” because a classroom and a music room from Phase 1 will be absorbed into the auditorium. An auditorium with fixed seats requires one parking space per 4 seats, so Phase 3 needs 63 spaces. The applicants have said that there will be no other activities in the building when a show is being performed, so it’s reasonable to only require a total of 63 spaces for the entire operation (i.e. Phases 1, 2 and 3 combined). Since Phase 1 and 2 require 25 spaces, another 38 spaces are needed. According to the attached aerial photograph of the adjacent building at 140 Day Street, there are approximately 20 parking spaces across the front of 140 Day Street and sufficient area on the south side of the building for another 18 parking spaces. The applicants have stated in their narrative that the lease for 136 Day street contains language that gives them access to the parking spaces at 140 Day Street “for theater events”.

If nothing derogatory comes up during the public hearing, I have no objection to approval with the condition that at least ten parking spaces be painted behind 136 Day Street, and a copy of the lease be submitted to confirm that they will have access to parking at 140 Day Street.

cc:
Newington Children’s Theatre Organization
file