

## NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

**RE:** 459 GREENWICH AVENUE, Special Exception to permit zero parking spaces where four spaces are required to permit a church in BA zone (Owner: True Worship Church, Inc. Applicant: Henry W. Morton, 10-13-S).  
**REPORT:** 1437-24  
**ADVICE:** Approval

### BACKGROUND

Henry W. Morton seeks a Special Exception to permit zero parking spaces where four spaces are required to permit a church in a BA zone.

At the BZA hearing on February 9, 2010, the applicant said that the church had only 32 members and that there was no way to access the rear yard for parking. Twelve persons were in favor; five spoke. Alderman Perez, a neighbor, said that on street parking was not an issue because there was plenty of parking on Kimberly Avenue. He also said that the church had received no complaints. Alderman Blango also said that he was not aware of any problems. A Pastor from Woodbridge and Rev. Bush from St. Paul's Church said that they knew the applicant to be a good person, the location to be convenient, and that crime has gone down since the church opened. A neighbor from across the street reiterated what the previous speakers said. One person spoke in opposition saying that area parking was congested.

### PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The scaled ground floor plan shows a 28'x28' sanctuary and a 28'x9' pulpit area. Since pew seats are not shown on the plan the exact number of congregants cannot be counted. However the applicant stated at the hearing that there were 32 members of the church. The remainder of the ground floor plan shows a bath, small lounge/reception area, and Bishop's and Overseer's offices. The basement has a fellowship hall, two baths, kitchen, utility room and small storage space.

#### Special Exception Criteria:

- Nature of the Proposed Site: The lot measures 36'x120' with the one-story building covering the entire width precluding driveway access to the rear yard which appears large enough for three cars. Assessor's records indicate the building was constructed circa 1900, prior to the adoption of current zoning. This application indicates no plans to expand the building. Assessor's records show the building has 1,900 square feet of living space. The small size of the building limits the size of the congregation.
- Resulting Traffic Patterns: This property is very close to where Lamberton, Kimberly and Greenwich intersect. Kimberly and Greenwich form an "X" intersection; Lamberton Street is just to the north. This area has a somewhat "dynamic" traffic pattern due to the unusual intersection arrangement. The applicant is asking for relief of four parking spaces. Greenwich has a pavement width of 36' and Kimberly's is 50'. When staff visited the area in midday, not many vehicles were parked on the street. Staff is of the opinion that the low number of congregants plus the availability of on-street parking would not harm the local traffic patterns.
- Nature of the Surrounding Area: The subject property is inside a BA zone in the Kimberly/Lamberton/Howard area with RM-1/2 zones on the periphery.
- Proximity to Public Buildings: The Betsy Ross school is located about 445' to the southwest.
- The Comprehensive Plan: The proposal does not contradict the advice of the Comprehensive Plan.

### ADVICE

The Commission advises that the limited size of the lot and building are factors that limit the size of the congregation. The request to eliminate the required four spaces is reasonable when considering that Kimberly Avenue can easily accommodate the four required spaces. For these reasons the Commission advises approval .

**ADOPTED:** February 17, 2010  
Edward Mattison  
Chair

**ATTEST:**   
Karyn M. Gilvarg AIA  
Executive Director