

MAIN LIBRARY

## Uncertainty over parking agreement



Hearst Connecticut Media file photo

The parking lot that serves 11 Belden Ave., adjacent to the Norwalk Public Library main branch.

NORWALK — The gate could go back up in front of a private parking lot that has been open to Norwalk Public Library patrons since June.

“If the mayor signs the addendum that we agreed upon on Friday, then we move forward as contemplated,” said Jason Milligan, principal with 587 CT AVE LLC, the owner of the lot facing Mott Avenue from 11 Belden Ave. “If he doesn’t sign it, then un-

fortunately it looks like we all wasted our time and efforts, and sadly the parking lot will be closed to the library patrons and general public.”

Milligan’s comments, written in an email, came after the Common Council on Wednesday evening revisited the option-to-purchase agreement it approved in July.

The council approved the agreement for the property at 11 Belden Ave. in July and allocated \$460,000 to start the process. However, the council approved

the appropriation subject to the city’s law department writing additional protections into the pact.

Council members revisited the issue during a special executive meeting at City Hall on Wednesday. Afterward, they took the following action as read by Councilman Thomas Livingston, the District E Democrat who chairs the council’s Land Use & Building Management Committee:

“We approve the addendum to  
*See Parking on A4*

## PARKING

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the option agreement presented to us tonight with the caveat that we give corporation counsel authority to further negotiate (insurance provisions) that it is more equitable to all parties,” Livingston said.

Corporation Counsel Mario Coppola, head of the city’s department, said afterward he would inform Milligan of the council’s action.

Under the option agreement, the city would gain exclusive use of the 28-space parking lot facing Mott Avenue from 11 Belden Ave. after it paid 587 CT AVE \$460,000. The city would have six years to decide whether to buy the larger parcel for up to \$4.8 million. The larger parcel is home to the People’s United Bank building, and the council wants assurances the city’s interests are protected.

“The council approved the addendum in its current form, subject for me to make some further revisions to that one section, to further provide appropriate protections for the city with regard to the requirement to maintain proper insurance on the building,” Coppola said.

Coppola, for the time being, has declined to release a copy of the addendum.

“I just want to wait, as a courtesy to Mr. Milligan, to discuss with him what the council’s approval was this evening,” Coppola said.

Milligan, in his email, said 14 new clauses were written into the addendum on Aug. 31 — the original deadline for signing the option agreement. He said he received a complete rewrite of the addendum



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The Norwalk Public Library main branch.

**“I hope that the parties will all show their best efforts to bring the option agreement into the end zone without having to suffer the agreement falling apart at the last minute and the parking chain being put back.”**

*Alex Knopp, chairman of the library’s board of directors*

Wednesday morning.

“It was rejected immediately,” Milligan wrote.

Former Mayor Alex Knopp, now chairman of the library’s board of directors, spearheaded the negotiations that led to the development of the option agreement. He expressed hope after Wednesday evening’s meeting the remaining issue regarding insurance will be resolved.

“Tonight, the council moved the option agree-

ment down to the one-yard line, but we’re not in the end zone yet,” Knopp said. “I hope that the parties will all show their best efforts to bring the option agreement into the end zone without having to suffer the agreement falling apart at the last minute and the parking chain being put back.”

Council Majority Leader John Kydes, a District C Democrat, described the agreement on the table as “fair.”

“I hope that the owner of the property will agree to the city’s terms,” Kydes said.

The Norwalk Parking Authority is awaiting the signing of the option agreement before it sinks \$200,000 into parking improvements. The plan calls for merging the library’s 14-space lot with the 28-space lot owned by 587 CT AVE LLC.

“We are ready to do the parking lot improvements,” said Kathryn Hebert, the city’s administrative services manager and staff person to the Parking Authority. “Until the option agreement is signed, we can’t do the improvements.”