

LOST IN NEW HAVEN, INC.
80 HAMILTON STREET
NEW HAVEN, CT 06511

March 10, 2026

VIA HAND-DELIVERY

Honorable Tyisha Walker-Myers
President
Board of Alders
City of New Haven
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510

Mr. Michael Smart
City/Town Clerk
City of New Haven
200 Orange Street
New Haven, CT 06510

Re: Petition to Amend the Text of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance, Section 42, Table 3, Use Table, Paragraph V, to Permit Cultural Activities Not Carried On As A Gainful Business, Including Art Galleries, Libraries and Museums to be Permitted As-Of-Right in Light Industrial (IL) Districts.

Dear President Walker-Myers and Mr. Smart:

Lost in New Haven, Inc., the operator of the Lost in New Haven Museum, respectfully requests that the New Haven Board of Alders amend the text of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance to permit nonprofit cultural activities, including art galleries, libraries and museums located in IL Districts to be as-of-right uses. Currently, such uses are prohibited in the IL zones. The requested amendment furthers the goals Vision 2034 to support the arts, to repurpose vacant industrial and manufacturing buildings for cultural activities, to make the arts more accessible to New Haven residents, and to update the Zoning Ordinance to support neighborhood development.

The Lost in New Haven Museum (“Lost In New Haven” or the “Museum”) holds in excess of 20,000 objects, maps, photographs and other memorabilia that document New Haven’s 400 year plus industrial, cultural and artistic history. The Museum is open to the public for visitation and tours and partners with schools and community organizations to host educational programs and musical and cultural events.

Lost in New Haven is located at 80 Hamilton Street in the IL District. As stated above, museums are not permitted uses in the IL District. In 2021, the New Haven Board of Zoning Appeals granted a use variance to permit Lost in New Haven to occupy a vacant industrial building at 80 Hamilton Street. In granting the use variance, the Board of Zoning Appeals noted that the former industrial building at that location was

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"perfect for what [was] proposed," noting that the high ceilings, strong concrete floors, sufficient size as well as the loading dock supported museum use.

Today, Lost in New Haven seeks to expand the Museum. Lost in New Haven has additional objects that it wishes to display, it needs space for its administrative functions (offices, a conference room), it requires storage spaces, and desires to have a library, a classroom, a community function space, and a gallery where it can host temporary exhibitions, including art shows of local artists. To achieve these goals, Lost in New Haven wishes to occupy the second floor of 80 Hamilton Street and also to acquire an adjoining vacant industrial property at 60 Hamilton Street, which is also in the IL District. In both instances, additional museum use is not permitted. Accordingly, the requested zoning amendment is necessary to allow the expansion of the Museum as-of-right thereby providing certainty to the Museum, its donors and its funders that museum use is an allowed use at these locations.

In sum, Lost in New Haven is seeking to change the text of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance to permit it to occupy these properties as-of-right. The Museum recognizes that such change would impact properties in addition to 60 and 80 Hamilton Street but believes that such zoning amendment is appropriate for those locations as well. This amendment will allow vacant and underutilized factories and warehouses, which are not appropriate for modern manufacturing, to be repurposed as cultural institutions. Such change will enliven neighborhoods, provide desperately needed space for the arts and bring museums, libraries and art galleries to a number of new locations in the City, thereby making cultural activities more accessible to the residents of New Haven.

The attached Petition for a Text Amendment complies with the requirements of Section 64(d)(2) of the Zoning Ordinance for an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance as well as the Charter requirements for a zoning amendment, as set forth in the attached Petition.

For all of these reasons, we urge approval of this Petition. Enclosed please find a check for the filing fee in the amount of \$1,500.

Very truly yours,

Cynthia Bannon
Managing Director

Enclosures

cc: Laura Brown, Executive Director of the City Plan Department (VIA Hand-Delivery)

Attachment A: Petition for Zoning Map Amendment
Attachment B: Proposed Ordinance for Zoning Text Amendment