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Rilling forms task force to improve SoNo

By ROBERT KOCH

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NORWALK -- Adding landscaping, introducing a trolley style shuttle, simplifying zoning regulations.

Those were several ideas kicked around during the inaugural meeting of Mayor Harry W. Rilling's SoNo Task Force held Friday at Beinfield Architecture PC on Marshall Street.

"You're only limited by your imagination and creativity," Rilling told task force members. Rilling traced the formation of the task force to concerns, which he said he heard from

SoNo merchants and others about parking, cleanliness and stores closing in recent years.

Former Mayor Bill Collins, who played a key role in the revitalization of SoNo several decades ago, will chair the SoNo Task Force.

"Perhaps our biggest task overall is to try to find a better connection between Washington Street and The Maritime Aquarium," Collins said.

The group met Friday in the offices of architect Bruce Beinfield, who also will sit on the Task Force.

Beinfield said 14 different zones exist in the area under the city's zoning regulations. He called for simplifying that structure to ease redevelopment efforts.

Rilling described the SoNo Task Force as a non-city, informal committee comprised of various stakeholders in South Norwalk.

Also on the committee: Rod Johnson, architect and former Norwalk Redevelopment Agency executive director; Stephanie Pelletier, marketing director for TR SoNo Partners; **C. Eric Rains, landscape architect**; Councilmen Travis Simms and David A. Watts; Bobby Burgess, South Norwalk resident; and Susan Sweitzer, senior project manager at the Redevelopment Agency.

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