

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

TOWN COUNCIL PUBIC HEARING

JANUARY 24, 2024 6:45 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS

Re: Application filed on behalf of Chick-fil-A, Inc. ("CFA"), as lessee of property commonly known at 509 New Park Avenue ("CFA" Premises), to modify Special Design District #94 (SDD #94) located at 509 New Park Avenue to accommodate a reconfiguration of the existing drive-thru lane and related site improvements including landscaping and parking

DEBRA A. CHASSE, CSR #00055

APPEARANCES:

Town Council Members Present:

SHARI CANTOR, MAYOR

BEN WENOGRAD, DEPUTY MAYOR

CAROL BLANKS

TIFFANI MCGINNIS

ALBERTO CORTES

BARRY WALTERS

DEBRA POLUN

MARK ZYDANOWICZ

BURKE DOAR

ALSO PRESENT:

RICK LEDWITH, TOWN MANAGER

LEON DAVIDOFF, TOWN CLERK/COUNCIL CLERK

DALLAS DODGE, CORPORATION COUNSEL

1 MAYOR CANTOR: We are at 6:45, so we
2 are going to call the 6:45 public hearing to order.
3 This is an application filed on behalf of Chick-fil-A,
4 Inc. ("CFA") as lessee of property commonly known as
5 509 New Park Avenue ("CFA" Premises"), to modify
6 Special Design District #94 (SDD #94) located at 509
7 New Park Avenue to accommodate a reconfiguration of the
8 existing drive-thru lane and related site improvements,
9 including landscaping and parking.

10 We will begin with roll call, Mr.
11 Davidoff.

12 MR. DAVIDOFF: Good evening, Madam
13 Mayor. Counselor Blanks.

14 MS. BLANKS: Present.

15 MR. DAVIDOFF: Mayor Cantor.

16 MAYOR CANTOR: Here.

17 MR. DAVIDOFF: Counselor Cortes.

18 MR. CORTES: Here.

19 MR. DAVIDOFF: Counselor Fay is
20 absent. Seating for Counselor Fay is Mr. Doar.

21 MR. DOAR: Here.

22 MR. DAVIDOFF: Counselor McGinnis.

23 MS. MCGINNIS: Here.

24 MR. DAVIDOFF: Counselor Polun.

25 MS. POLUN: Here.

1 MR. DAVIDOFF: Counselor Walters.

2 MR. WALTERS: Here.

3 MR. DAVIDOFF: Deputy Mayor
4 Wenograd.

5 MR. WENOGRAD: Here.

6 MR. DAVIDOFF: Counselor Zydanowicz.

7 MR. ZYDANOWICZ: Here.

8 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
9 Davidoff. And I want to welcome Mr. Doar back to the
10 table. He has served on the counsel before. It's nice
11 to have a seasoned alternate and we appreciate that
12 very much and thank Carol for giving you up for an
13 evening. So we will begin with the applicant
14 presentation.

15 MS. SOUCHENS: Great. Good evening,
16 ladies and gentlemen. Amy Souchens here on behalf of
17 Chick-Fil-A, Inc., which is the lessee. Seated to my
18 right is Nick Dewhurst, who is our project engineer,
19 and we have a whole Chick-fil-A team, including our
20 operator here in the audience in the event that there
21 are any questions about what we're going to present to
22 you tonight but, as you noted in the introduction, this
23 is a fairly minor revision to the drive-thru lane and
24 some associated landscaping as a result of those
25 modifications of the drive-thru lane.

1 Many of you probably know, if you've
2 been to the site, this is currently a drive-thru
3 configuration that predates Chick-fil-A's modern
4 standard for a dual lane queue. Nick will go through
5 the technical details, but what this is intended to do
6 is address a lot of the traffic backup and stacking
7 that has -- particularly Chick-fil-A has experienced in
8 the post-Covid world where people choose to utilize the
9 drive-thru more heavily than they did beforehand in
10 coming into the store.

11 We have been through all of your
12 referral agencies. TBDC provided a positive referral.
13 They were at Design Review last week. They also
14 provided a positive referral. We've addressed all the
15 comments that we had from the engineering department.
16 There was an updated set of plans that was submitted to
17 your staff last Friday and, most importantly, we do
18 have a letter of support from the Chamber of Commerce
19 in support of the revisions that you see here.

20 On one other housekeeping note, we did
21 note or submit the signed affidavit for the posting to
22 the staff to Mr. DeMay earlier today. With that, I'll
23 turn it over to Nick to walk you through the details,
24 and then we're happy to address any questions for other
25 items that we're presenting.

1 MR. DEWHURST: Thank you, Amy.
2 Again, for the record, Nick Dewhurst with Bohler.
3 We're the site civil engineer on the project.

4 So, as Amy mentioned, and I know you
5 guys all have a printout of this plan that we're
6 looking at in front of you. So I can sort of just walk
7 you through that.

8 So the red line work that you're
9 seeing, that's the proposed improvements. So to just
10 kind of highlight some of the bigger picture items
11 here. As Amy mentioned, really our goal here is just
12 to bring the drive-thru up to a more modern Chick-fil-A
13 standard, and really what we're doing to do that is
14 we're creating a two-lane drive-thru throughout its
15 entire length. So we're expanding the entrance of the
16 drive-thru from about 12 feet to 22 feet, again to
17 create that second full lane. And, similarly, at the
18 exit we're expanding that to create that second full
19 lane, as well. In creating that full length lane, we
20 are relocating a handful of parking spaces. The total
21 site today consists of 114 spaces. It will result in
22 112 with these improvements.

23 Additionally, within the drive-thru,
24 there will be some pavement marking improvements and,
25 really, again, this is sort of Chick-fil-A's standard

1 design. We're creating a 3-foot access aisle in the
2 middle of the two drive-thru lanes, and that's really
3 for team member access to serve meals or take orders
4 from customers.

5 In addition to the drive-thru and
6 parking improvements, we're also relocating the storage
7 shed that currently exists at the rear of the trash
8 enclosure. With the new expanded drive-thru, we need
9 to relocate that storage shed just to the side of it.

10 We're also proposing some pretty
11 significant landscaping improvements here, mainly
12 around the new landscape islands that we will be
13 creating as part of the parking improvements.

14 That's sort of a high level overview
15 of the proposed improvements. As Amy said, we received
16 comments from the engineering department, and we did
17 work through those. We made some minor adjustments to
18 some signage and pavement markings, as requested.

19 With that being said, we're happy to
20 answer any questions that you all may have.

21 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you, Nick and
22 Amy. I appreciate it. I'm going to open to questions,
23 but I do want to just recognize public comment first.

24 Mr. Davidoff, did you receive any
25 written comments?

1 MR. DAVIDOFF: Yes. On January 19,
2 2024, we received a letter in support of the
3 application from Christopher Conway, president, West
4 Hartford Chamber.

5 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you. And
6 nobody signed up. Is there anybody in the audience
7 that would like to speak to this application? Okay.

8 And so questions by council.
9 Anybody? Miss Blanks?

10 MS. BLANKS: Thank you, Madam Mayor.
11 Thank for you for the presentation, as well as the
12 application. I do have a few questions, especially
13 since I frequent that plaza quite often when my
14 daughters are here. They're Chick-fil-A women. So
15 where do I want to begin.

16 Let's begin with the current drive
17 lane. So right now when you drive into Chick-fil-A,
18 you come to one stop sign and then you go through a
19 second stop sign and you turn left. You have your
20 cones up, so you can't go in that direction. You have
21 to go down the one drive aisle and then come around to,
22 I think, the second one. Right?

23 MR. DEWHURST: Yes.

24 MS. BLANKS: So right now when you
25 come through the second one, you drive up, there's one

1 lane, and then that one lane bifurcates into two lanes
2 where you place your order. Then it goes to one lane
3 to pick up your food. So are you proposing to have
4 that two-lane all the way to the window to pick up your
5 food, so if you're on the outer lane, is someone
6 bringing the food to the car?

7 MR. DEWHURST: Sure. And, if
8 needed, I can have some of our Chick-fil-A
9 representatives speak to the actual operations in a
10 little bit more detail. But that is correct. We will
11 be creating two full length drive-thru lanes from the
12 beginning to the end.

13 To answer your question sort of on
14 the traffic circulation, as you mentioned, there are
15 cones, from what I know, sort of blocking off traffic
16 entering into the drive-thru from that point. As part
17 of the improvements, we're actually going to be putting
18 up a painted stop bar and "do not enter" pavement
19 markings to sort of further delineate that to make it
20 an actual permanent solution and part of the traffic
21 circulation out there. So the general traffic
22 circulation will stay the same, but it will be sort of
23 more reinforced and a more permanent solution.

24 MS. BLANKS: Thank you for that
25 response, because what I was thinking was so that area

1 won't be narrowed, the length will remain the same, but
2 you'll put something there to prevent people, because I
3 have seen people --

4 MR. DEWHURST: Absolutely. We still
5 have the 24 feet, which is sort of typical for two-way
6 traffic, but there won't be that sort of entrance point
7 there. It's really just an exit only, and it will be
8 properly signed and marked as such.

9 MS. BLANKS: Thank you. I have
10 another question.

11 The other thing that's interesting
12 is, maybe about a month or so ago when I was getting
13 gas, I noticed that you have a delivery truck there.
14 So the delivery truck is not able to come into that
15 area. The delivery truck has to park over on the other
16 side of the stop sign; is that accurate? Do you know
17 that? Or am I incorrect? Because that's what I saw
18 him do.

19 MR. DEWHURST: We do have the
20 operator here. It might be a good opportunity, if he
21 wants speak to that.

22 MS. SOUCHENS: Just to clarify, you
23 mean a supplier truck, not the Chick-fil-A food truck?

24 MS. BLANKS: Perhaps that's going to
25 be my question, because what I noticed was it appeared

1 to be either supplier or delivery, but they couldn't
2 park where your cars are parked, so they had to park on
3 the other side. I guess that's an island, perhaps, the
4 area where the stop sign is where you turn right to go
5 into the gas station, and I was concerned because as I
6 was turning left to exit out of the center, he was
7 trying to get across with the -- what do you call the
8 things that you push?

9 MR. JACKSON: The dolly.

10 MS. BLANKS: I noticed there wasn't
11 a crosswalk, so there's just a stop sign and then the
12 stop that's another concern of mine.

13 MR. JACKSON: Sure. Thank you for
14 the question. What you saw that day was not our
15 standard operating procedure. Ideally, those delivery
16 trucks from our supplier show up in the middle of the
17 night when there's no one there. What happens, on
18 occasion, if a truck breaks down or a driver calls out
19 sick, the truck may be delayed and that's what you
20 witnessed that day. So we do try to get out there and
21 help coordinate traffic, and what have you, to prevent
22 any potential accidents from occurring.

23 MAYOR CANTOR: Mr. Jackson, just for
24 the record, can you say your complete name and also
25 your role?

1 MR. JACKSON: Yes. My apologies.
2 Darrel Jackson. I am the operator in West Hartford,
3 Connecticut. I've been here for -- I guess we're
4 approaching seven years now that we've been in town.
5 It goes quick. And I have been delighted with the
6 support that we have received from this community in
7 terms of growing our business and giving us the
8 opportunity to provide gainful employment to a number
9 of employees that are from the community, as well. So
10 thank you for what you do.

11 MS. BLANKS: I'm all set. Thank
12 you, Madam Mayor.

13 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you. Mr.
14 Zydanowicz.

15 MR. ZYDANOWICZ: Thank you, Madam
16 Mayor. You had mentioned in your -- I think it was
17 you, Nick. It could have been Amy. I wasn't here
18 originally seven years ago when this came through town
19 council or eight years ago, probably. But you had
20 mentioned that this new redesign is your standard
21 operating Chick-fil-A operation. I'm wondering why, if
22 it's the standard operating, why you hadn't implemented
23 that in the original design and if there were barriers
24 up at that time with zoning, or this was the solution
25 at the time, and it's been redesigned through your

1 organization. I'm just kind of curious about that.

2 MS. SOUCHENS: That's exactly what
3 it was. The layout that you see -- and I've worked on
4 some other -- around the same time, and we're working
5 on updating a number of sites across Connecticut. What
6 you see out there right now was the current design in
7 that timeframe and what has happened, as I said at the
8 beginning, particularly in a post-Covid world, I think
9 we're not the only ones, but Chick-fil-A is certainly
10 an industry leader in the drive-thru design and
11 management. They have found that this really does add
12 a lot of efficiency to the layout and to the queue.
13 Gideon or Darrell can walk you through the details of
14 how it actually works, if you're interested, and that
15 would be helpful in understanding how both queues work
16 but, ultimately, that's what it was, that this is a
17 more recent prototype design.

18 MR. LEE: If I can add some more
19 color to that.

20 MAYOR CANTOR: If you could state
21 your name.

22 MR. LEE: It's Gideon Lee with JLL,
23 the development manager for this project.

24 As Amy has mentioned, post-Covid
25 world, this is now our, I guess, adapted prototype.

1 Coming out of Covid, our sales channels have shifted
2 from dine-in, typically, to our drive-thru. So,
3 obviously, we've adapted to that with our prototype.
4 But before that we didn't anticipate our sales channel
5 shifting so heavily. Nobody anticipated Covid for what
6 it was. It's simply that the prototype has changed,
7 and now this is now our latest and greatest.

8 MAYOR CANTOR: Okay. Mr. Cortes.

9 MR. CORTES: Thank you, Madam Mayor.
10 So my question is, you know, if approved, what's the
11 timeline or how long would it take to do this and what
12 impact would it have on the Aldi's, which kind of
13 shares the same parking lot?

14 MR. LEE: I could speak to that.
15 I'll defer to Nick on the timelines, because it all
16 variants in with the entitlement process.

17 I would say this will probably be
18 projected for an early 2025 start. If we were to
19 project it out, that will give us enough time to get
20 permits in hand, give us enough time to get a GC on
21 board, so on and so forth. That's -- the projected
22 construction start date would be early '25.

23 MS. SOUCHENS: The one thing that I
24 would add is that after we get through the SCD
25 amendment process, because this drive-thru predates

1 your more recent drive-thru amendment, we have to go
2 back through TBDC. We have one more round of approval
3 on this before we can start, as Gideon noted, the
4 building permit construction timeframe, which is why it
5 seems like it's very far away for the type of
6 improvement we're talking about, but that's why,
7 ultimately. We have one more step.

8 MR. LEE: I don't believe I answered
9 the question on the Aldi component. We've worked very
10 closely with Aldi's with multiple iterations to get to
11 where we are today, and they've approved our plan as it
12 stands, so we are going through those legal routs of
13 making sure that's all dotted. We will have their
14 official approval for this project.

15 MR. CORTES: I guess -- so the
16 question was more with the construction, and we'll
17 probably need to see who the general contractor is and
18 see the times and, you know, so until we don't do that
19 piece, we probably won't know the answer as far as
20 hours of construction.

21 MR. LEE: They'll have approval
22 rights on our lay down areas and such. We'll be
23 predominantly bifurcated from Aldi's operations. Aldi
24 will not be affected by our construction, but we will
25 be working closely with Aldi on that.

1 MR. CORTES: And then the most
2 important question, will you guys be open while that's
3 happening or am I going to have to go somewhere else?

4 MR. LEE: That's a great question.
5 We will have a door replacement there. There's a
6 window that -- yeah, exactly there. It's just a pickup
7 window. We'd be installing what's called a TORMAX
8 door. It's a proprietary door that opens up fully so
9 that team members can deliver to the second lane and
10 hug the inner lane, as well. So that requires a short
11 amount of shutdown; not what you're used to, six to
12 eight weeks in other areas. Hopefully, it will be a
13 short, especially for Darrel. We want to get him open
14 as soon as possible.

15 MAYOR CANTOR: That's good news.
16 Will both drive-thrus be operational at the -- when
17 that window --

18 MR. LEE: There will be a phasing
19 plan that we'll have to generate with our general
20 contractor once they're on board. The idea is to get
21 one lane fully constructed and, just by looking at this
22 plan, I don't want to speak to you early on, but I
23 think we'll have some opportunities just to phase it
24 out properly, but there will be some disruptions,
25 obviously.

1 MAYOR CANTOR: Miss McGinnis.

2 MS. MCGINNIS: Thank you for the
3 presentation. I wanted to confirm that I wrote this
4 down right. You have 114 spaces currently, and at the
5 completion you'll have 112; is that fair?

6 MR. DEWHURST: Yes.

7 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you, Miss
8 McGinnis. Miss Blanks.

9 MS. BLANKS: Thank you, Madam Mayor.
10 During the construction and then
11 after the construction, a thought just occurred to me
12 in terms of you'll have the two drive lanes, or you'll
13 have some increasing volume there, and during
14 construction, since you share it with Aldi's, some
15 people may need to park on the other side and walk
16 over, whether it's during construction or after and,
17 Mr. Town Manager, I don't know if this is a town issue,
18 but I'm thinking about the crosswalk and the markings
19 that something else would need to be established, just
20 in terms of safety, because that area is pretty busy in
21 terms of BJ's and those cars backing up often and then
22 the cars turning into Aldi's and then cars turning into
23 Chick-fil-A, as well. So I don't know who would need
24 to address that. That is a concern of mine.

25 MR. LEDWITH: As part of the

1 project, the team has agreed to refresh all of the
2 crosswalks, not just within the parking lot there at
3 Aldi's and Chick-fil-A, but outside on the main strip
4 when you take a left into the development.

5 MS. BLANKS: Thank you for that.

6 So I just want to be clear. So the
7 development -- so when you come in, there's the stop
8 sign there where you turn right going towards Home
9 Depot, left to BJ's, and then there's another stop sign
10 there. So you're talking about putting crosswalk
11 markings there or just leaving the word stop on that
12 street or on that drive lane? If that's what you refer
13 to it as.

14 MR. LEE: If I can speak to that and
15 then I'll let Amy go, as well. That's a great question
16 and great point. We do have a leased premises that's
17 pretty much curbed in, meaning our sidewalk -- if you
18 can imagine the Chick-fil-A building, then the
19 sidewalk. Our leased side is really from that outside
20 curb, so that's what we technically have rights over,
21 so we would need to have Aldi's make those improvements
22 and, again, we just don't have that control on what we
23 paint or construct outside of our premises, if that
24 makes sense.

25 MS. BLANKS: I understand that, so

1 that's why I'm raising it now while you're going to be
2 doing these improvements.

3 MR. LEE: If I could add on the
4 construction side, so just a little bit of clarity,
5 when we are shut down for that door installation, we're
6 going to do as much drive-thru as we can. Customers
7 aren't going to be there -- you'll have some people
8 come in and do a U-turn and go out, but, you know, it
9 will be fully shut down, so, hopefully, I think that,
10 you know, let's call it a week max of shut down, that
11 should give a runway to do a lot of drive-thru
12 improvements, and then today -- we're not changing the
13 pattern of the drive-thru coming in, like doing that
14 U-turn, like you mentioned, Miss Blanks. So that will
15 stay and that will act as our, you know, emergency
16 queue, if that makes sense. So we'll have that as
17 extra measure to make sure that we're putting all of
18 the cars out of that busy intersection and into our
19 site and into our queue, if that helps.

20 MS. BLANKS: No. Thank you for
21 that, though. Thank you for the clarification.

22 So my concern is I would prefer for
23 it to be addressed beforehand instead of something
24 happening, and then we would have to do something
25 after; if an accident occurs, someone gets hit or

1 anything like that.

2 MS. SOUCHENS: This was one of the
3 items that we discussed with Mr. DeMay about the
4 engineering comments for, as Gideon noted, our leased
5 premises is, frankly -- the building and the drive-thru
6 are the interior. The engineering comments we got
7 earlier today were talking about some of the things you
8 mentioned with the crosswalk and everything, as Gideon
9 noted, outside of our leased premises.

10 Aldi is actually our landlord, so
11 what we discussed with, and what Mr. DeMay was looking
12 at, was there is an obligation in the entire SDD for
13 maintenance, so we will certainly, as part of this
14 project, alert Aldi, as Gideon noted. They're aware
15 that we're coming in, that there might be comments or
16 questions or anything like that. So we will alert them
17 to the request that this maintenance and some of the
18 wear that's been done is ultimately one of the last
19 engineering comments, that that's the request. Mr.
20 DeMay did note that in the existing SDD, nothing that
21 we are amending, there is that maintenance obligation,
22 so if it's not completed, he actually has enforcement
23 authority to make sure it's done.

24 MS. BLANKS: Okay. Thank you.

25 MAYOR CANTOR: Mr. Wenograd?

1 MR. WENOGRAD: Thank you. I know
2 you were queued up to talk about the details exactly
3 how the car service, how it works. So I do have
4 questions about the worker safety.

5 You've got -- I see in the response
6 to the town, that you've got members directing
7 customers on traffic, so they're actually in the road
8 doing that direction, and then you have other staff
9 members that will be coming out to bring food to the
10 outer. I'd like to hear about your safety standards,
11 what training you're doing to ensure the rush of -- so
12 people aren't stepping in front of cars and whether or
13 not since this is a standard that you have elsewhere,
14 whether you have had OSHA incidents in other places and
15 whether they've been addressed.

16 MR. LEE: Sure. So on that first
17 part of the question, that's a great point. Our
18 prototype -- obviously, safety is a huge factor for
19 Chick-fil-A. We're a global company and if one thing
20 happens in California, it could affect the brand. They
21 put a huge emphasis on safety. So that striping that
22 you see between the two lanes, that's what team members
23 will either take orders at the order point. If you
24 look at the plans for the plan north, there's a dual
25 there that team members today take orders at. So

1 they're protected by that 3-foot team member space, and
2 they can walk along that entire 3-foot team member
3 space, and when they get to the meal delivery point at
4 the window, if you will, I guess now it's going to be a
5 door, they can safely cross. What you see in the 3
6 like Adidas lines, that's a crosswalk for team members
7 to get over safely and, again, to be protected in that
8 3-foot team member zone, all along that -- between the
9 meal order point and then the meal delivery point, so
10 that's one aspect, and then all our team members wear
11 high vis gear, and they go through safety measures and
12 safety videos. I'll defer to Darrell on the frequency
13 and what have you. We can fill you in on more details.

14 Our safety measures are pretty
15 robust with our team members. Obviously, the No. 1
16 thing is safety for our team members and our guests, as
17 well. Darrell, if you want to speak to the actual
18 details.

19 MR. JACKSON: We are extremely
20 diligent about trying to train team members, that
21 they're always aware of their surroundings, not only
22 for their own personal safety but, obviously, for the
23 safety of the customer. I actually believe the future
24 state model that we're talking about here today will be
25 safer than the model that we run today, because there's

1 quite a deal of additional markings and safety zones
2 that are established and present and visible in the
3 future state that we don't even have today.

4 So I think, through the continued
5 training that we do, the reassessments that we do on a
6 frequent basis, especially as we introduce new
7 employees into the environment, as well as staying on
8 top of all that high visibility gear. I don't know if
9 anyone's been in the restaurant, they see the big
10 reflective vests that our team wears in an effort to
11 make sure that customers can see them and they stand
12 out. We give them fluorescent green hats that they all
13 hate but, again, in an effort to make sure they stand
14 out.

15 I think those training routines, in
16 addition to the additional visibility and signage we'll
17 have here, it's going to make it even more of a safe
18 environment.

19 MR. WENOGRAD: Thank you.

20 MR. JACKSON: Did I answer your
21 question?

22 MR. WENOGRAD: Pretty much. In that
23 lane that you pointed out, how is that -- are there
24 physical barriers, or is it just a painted line? I'm
25 not familiar with the --

1 MR. LEE: It's a 3-foot -- it is not
2 restricted by any permanent measures. Darrell may
3 choose to put the removable bollards, if he chooses, to
4 direct traffic, or what have you, but it would be
5 striping.

6 MR. WENOGRAD: You don't have any --
7 there's no permanent -- you can put temporary, there's
8 no permanent bollards.

9 MR. LEE: Exactly. You know, your
10 big F250s will blow through those making that tight
11 turn. But, yeah, it's just -- it's just the striping.

12 MR. WENOGRAD: I don't have any
13 other questions.

14 MR. LEE: If I can just add one last
15 thing. Team members are typically going to be there
16 delivering the meals. They're not going to be walking
17 down and back and forth at the meal delivery point, but
18 at the meal order point, that's where they'll have
19 their I-Pads protected within that 3-foot member space,
20 and there you have columns to protect you if you look
21 at the order point.

22 MR. WENOGRAD: All right. Thank
23 you.

24 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you. Mr.
25 Cortes.

1 MR. CORTES: I just wanted to go
2 back to something in regards to what Counselor Blanks
3 was talking about, because I do understand that the
4 applicant -- it's beyond their application, but it's
5 something that I -- so what she's talking about there's
6 a stop -- there's a stop just over the box there. You
7 see how you have the box, and if you go up north --
8 right above the cross box right there. And you go to
9 the road, see the stop, there's two lanes, yes. I
10 think that's where Counselor Blanks was referring to,
11 and it does get a little hairy at certain times right
12 around there, so prior to the applicant completing
13 their construction, if there's any way that the town
14 can reach out to the SDD and address that issue,
15 because, you know, this is probably outdated when all
16 these were formed, and things have evolved over time,
17 especially with the pandemic, so the traffic there is
18 probably heavier than what we expected 15 years ago. I
19 think that's what Counselor Blanks was talking about,
20 and I'm wondering if that's something we can discuss.

21 MR. LEDWITH: Actually, I had a
22 communication from our town planner that I didn't read.
23 It was sent at 5:30 p.m. It does draw attention to
24 what Counselor Blanks and, actually, what the attorney
25 had stated, as well. It's part of the larger SDD in

1 that area and are -- Mr. DeMay had mentioned that we
2 were sending a zoning enforcement officer out to meet
3 with the larger development and start to address the
4 reflection of the paint throughout the entire site. So
5 it doesn't fall under the authority of SDD No. 94. We
6 would be addressing that through the larger SDD.

7 MR. CORTES: Thank you.

8 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
9 Ledwith. Mr. Walters.

10 MR. WALTERS: Thank you, Madam
11 Mayor. It also occurs to me that there's a bus stop
12 right there with a pull out, so a simple crosswalk
13 might not be practical there with a bus pull out, and
14 it's more than just -- there's a lot going on right in
15 that little spot right there. It may be beyond even
16 the current, who we're talking to right now, CTtransit,
17 might be part of the equation.

18 MAYOR CANTOR: Mr. Walters, I think
19 you're right, and that's one of the thoughts I had. I
20 think we need to have a follow-up conversation with our
21 town planner and make sure all the parties understand
22 what is happening in that intersection, and I do
23 remember when we had Aldi's, there was a lot of
24 discussion about that, too. That's not your -- that is
25 outside of your lease, so we will have those

1 discussions. Are there any other questions? Mr. Doar.

2 MR. DOAR: Thank you, Madam Mayor.

3 The angle and the curb coming up to the window, I
4 assume Chick-fil-A and other drive-thrus are always
5 conscious of the proper angles for two driveways, and
6 that is consistent with typical layouts. You see, I'm
7 getting to the point, it's not too tight.

8 MR. LEE: Exactly. We have our sort
9 of typical make on this one, but this one is greater
10 than a 20-foot radius, which is our absolute minimum.
11 Is that correct?

12 MR. DEWHURST: Yeah. That's
13 correct. This plan does -- in fact, we provide larger
14 radiuses than the Chick-fil-A standards do allow, so
15 we're confident that there will be no issues with that.

16 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you, Mr. Doar.
17 That was one of my questions.

18 So the current lane is 12 feet,
19 though, I thought, and so now you have two 10-foot
20 lanes, and the 10-foot lanes, driving in them feels,
21 especially if you're in a Ford 150 or Suburban or
22 something, it feels small. I just want to make sure
23 also that navigating that, if you had to side by side,
24 how would that work.

25 MR. LEE: Absolutely. If you look

1 at the first radius after the order point, after that
2 first canopy. You can see that we are peeling back
3 that curb from existing. While the lanes are being
4 somewhat reduced, our absolute minimum is 9 feet
5 nationwide, I guess program wide, and, you know, to
6 adapt to industry standards, we lead with 10. We'd
7 like 12, in a lot of reasons, but just with the
8 constraints of our site, we try to squeeze in as much
9 as we can. Quite honestly, operationally speaking,
10 I'll go to Darrel on how he chooses to run it.

11 Typically, after the order point, we
12 merge the guests, we send the guest into one lane,
13 whether it's the outside or inner lane. It's not going
14 to be common that you have the dual, like two cars
15 stacked up on that second lane, but we will get to the
16 point, from a capacity perspective, that that may
17 happen, but when that does come, I believe that the 9.7
18 and the 9 and the 10 and 10.1s will be sufficient for
19 the cars.

20 MAYOR CANTOR: Okay. Thank you.

21 And I just worry about snow removal,
22 or whatever. And then that's probably one of the
23 reasons why the dividers are difficult for that. Is
24 there going to be any change in the way that works?

25 MR. JACKSON: Currently, we contract

1 with a third party that comes in and plows the
2 drive-thru and handles all of our snow removal; the
3 same organization that does the rest of the plowing.
4 He treats the drive-thru a little bit differently with
5 specialized products, but I don't envision that process
6 changing at all. In terms of, you know, what are those
7 cones called, the magnetic.

8 MR. LEE: The removal bollards.

9 MR. JACKSON: The removal bollards,
10 we'll use that a lot during the course of the
11 operations to direct traffic and to keep people in
12 their lane, if you will, but those are also easily
13 removed for snow removal.

14 MAYOR CANTOR: The last question
15 that I have that is different than my colleagues. Is
16 the storage shed moving out, that has no food in it or
17 anything; right? That's just supplies?

18 MR. JACKSON: Just supplies.

19 MAYOR CANTOR: And navigating
20 through those drive lanes to a dumpster, or whatever,
21 is not -- is that -- there's really no significant
22 change in that either; correct?

23 MR. LEE: Correct.

24 MAYOR CANTOR: All right. Okay.
25 The last round of -- all right. Then I have to do my

1 read into the record. We referred to it, but I just
2 wanted to read it into the record. Letter dated
3 January 8, 2024 from the town planning and zoning
4 commission recommending approval. Letter dated January
5 19, 2024 from Design Review Advisory Committee
6 recommending approval. Letter dated January 10, 2024
7 from Capital Region Council of Governments finding no
8 apparent conflict with regional plans or policies or
9 the concerns of neighboring towns. If there's no
10 further questions, the public hearing is closed, and we
11 will begin our next public hearing. Thank you very
12 much.

13 (Whereupon, the Hearing was
14 adjourned at 7:22 p.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, DEBRA A. CHASSE, Court Reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of Connecticut, duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that the foregoing 30 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original verbatim notes taken of the Public Hearing held before the West Hartford Town Council.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal this 8th day of February, 2024.



Debra A. Chasse, CSR
Notary Public
State of Connecticut

My Commission Expires:
June 30, 2026
CSR No. 00055