

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

**CERTIFIED
COPY**

TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

AUGUST 22, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS

**Re: Application filed on behalf of Prospect
Plaza Improvements, LLC**

DEBRA A. CHASSE, CSR #00055

APPEARANCES:

Town Council Members Present:

SHARI CANTOR, MAYOR

LIAM SWEENEY, DEPUTY MAYOR

CAROL BLANKS

ALBERTO CORTES

DEBRA POLUN

BEN WENOGRAD

TIFFANI MCGINNIS

JOHN TUCKER (Alternate)

DEEPAK KHATIWADA (Alternate)

ALSO PRESENT:

RICK LEDWITH, TOWN MANAGER

LEON DAVIDOFF, TOWN CLERK/COUNCIL CLERK

DALLAS DODGE, CORPORATION COUNSEL

1 MAYOR CANTOR: I'm calling our 6
2 p.m. public hearing to order. This is application
3 filed on behalf of Prospect Plaza Improvements, LLC,
4 owner of 245 Prospect Avenue, Special Development
5 District #11, more commonly known as Prospect Plaza.
6 The application seeks permission to amend the existing
7 SDD to allow the installation of a new 5,000 square
8 foot out-building which includes three new tenant
9 spaces.

10 We'll begin with role call.

11 MR. DAVIDOFF: Good evening, Madam
12 Mayor.

13 MAYOR CANTOR: Good evening.

14 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Blanks.

15 MS. BLANKS: Present.

16 MR. DAVIDOFF: Mayor Cantor.

17 MAYOR CANTOR: Here.

18 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Cortes.

19 MR. CORTES: Here.

20 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Fay.

21 Seated for Councilor Fay is Mr. Tucker.

22 MR. TUCKER: Present.

23 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor McGinnis.

24 MS. MCGINNIS: Present.

25 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Polun.

1 MS. POLUN: Here.

2 MR. DAVIDOFF: Deputy Mayor Sweeney.

3 MR. SWEENEY: Here.

4 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Wenograd.

5 MR. WENOGRAAD: Here.

6 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Zydanowicz.

7 Seated for Councilor Zydanowicz is Mr. Khatiwada.

8 MR. KHATIWADA: Present.

9 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.

10 Davidoff.

11 We'll now begin with the
12 presentation from the applicant. Come on up.

13 MS. OLSON: Thank you. Good
14 evening. My name is Kari Olson. I'm a partner with
15 Murtha Cullina. I represent Prospect Plaza, LLC and
16 DLC Management in the application to amend SDD No. 11.
17 First and foremost, I want to thank you all for pulling
18 together a quorum on a beautiful summer evening. I
19 think that is very impressive. I know many of you were
20 here the last time with were before you, and I'm very
21 excited to be here again tonight to present what is the
22 next phase of the proposed improvements to the Prospect
23 Plaza. For those of you who were alternates and
24 weren't part of the previous proceedings, you should
25 know that with the assistance of this council and their

1 planning objective, we have made great progress in
2 improving the Prospect Plaza over the past decade. We
3 have some heads shaking, so you know. Starting with
4 Laura Decor putting in the plan of fitness and, most
5 recently, permitting all of the same uses that are
6 allowed in the underlying BB zone has given the
7 property owner the ability to really market this to a
8 better -- to a more robust option.

9 I am pleased to announce, as we
10 stand here tonight, that the existing plaza is 95
11 percent occupied. Which today, as you know, brick and
12 mortar, that's incredible, and you owe a lot of that to
13 your cooperation with us.

14 So what we're here for today is to
15 talk about improving the southeast corner of the
16 Prospect Plaza. As you know right now, that is just
17 basically a sea of parking spaces. It's also,
18 effectively, the gateway to West Hartford in that area.
19 It corners Prospect and Kane Street. So what we're
20 proposing today is an out-building that will house a
21 Chipotle restaurant and two other restaurant/retail
22 uses to infill. And that's really important because,
23 with good planning -- we're not going out and we're not
24 taking virgin land and tearing down trees and putting
25 in impervious surface. This is an existing parking lot

1 that will now become way more functional and attractive
2 than what exists there today.

3 In order to present all of this to
4 you, I have a number of individuals here today to both
5 present this to you in more detail and to answer your
6 questions. I have, from DLC Greg Oshins, Jack O'Brien,
7 and Martin Ramirez. I have from Phase Zero Design,
8 Chris Milliard, and I have, from Bohler Engineering,
9 Jeff Bord. With that, I'm going to turn it over to
10 Greg Oshins. Thank you.

11 MR. OSHINS: Hi. Good evening. I'm
12 Greg Oshins. I'm vice president of redevelopment for
13 DLC Management and Prospect Plaza Improvement, who is
14 the owner of the Prospect Plaza Shopping Center. At
15 the risk of repeating just about everything that Kari
16 Olson just said, she made so many good points, I'll say
17 the following.

18 The last few years have been
19 important ones for the Prospect Plaza Shopping Center.
20 The big catalyst for it was putting Floor & Decor into
21 the former ShopRite space and beyond that -- that was
22 the first iteration with the help of the council.
23 Following up on that, we made several applications to
24 you and ultimately put Planet Fitness into the shopping
25 center to take the place of a dark restaurant tenant

1 and have made several other important improvements. So
2 we're excited about this next iteration of the project.

3 The addition of this out parcel
4 building is one that really enhances the shopping
5 center for the community, both aesthetically and
6 functionally, and it's really a testament to how much
7 demand we're seeing in the marketplace, our leasing
8 team is feeling, for this location. We are long-term
9 owners of the shopping center, we feel very good about
10 the location, and we're also very pleased with how the
11 building itself now, in collaboration are both the town
12 staff and you, and the design and architectural
13 committee has really come out, and I think that the
14 collaboration and swapping of ideas has really resulted
15 in a design that really accomplishes, I think, our
16 objective, as well as the town's objective, and I just
17 want to say thank you on behalf of our firm for hearing
18 us tonight. Thanks. Chris Milliard with Phase Zero.

19 MR. MILLIARD: Good evening. My
20 name is Chris Milliard from Phase Zero Design, a
21 licensed architect. Our office is in Simsbury,
22 Connecticut.

23 I just want to go through the
24 architecture really quickly. As Kari mentioned, we're
25 looking to renovate Prospect Plaza on this corner, the

1 southeast corner of the site. That's right on the
2 intersection of Kane and Prospect. We've put this
3 slide together to give you kind of a quick
4 understanding of what the existing architecture, what
5 the existing structures look like surrounding our site,
6 so you can kind of see what the setting is that we're
7 putting this new building into.

8 Item 1 is the Dunkin' Donuts, as you
9 can see, across the intersection and then really these
10 other buildings, 2, 3, 4 and 5, are all pieces of
11 existing Prospect Plaza. The last one being the Floor
12 & Decor.

13 I'll go through elevation. We have
14 a couple of quick renderings I'll share with you. We
15 have an incredibly productive and successful
16 collaboration with the committee. There's been a
17 little back and forth, some comments and suggestions
18 that they made which we were more than happy to
19 implement into the design. Those suggestions talked
20 about improving materials, making sure the building is
21 of quality material, durable materials. We ensured the
22 building height and building screening is appropriate
23 for the mechanical equipment. We've also accented
24 building entrances and in the bottom left one shows the
25 proposed tenant, as it faces Kane Street, so we want to

1 make sure the building has frontage on Kane Street but
2 also have frontage facing the parking lot, which is
3 where we know a lot of the customers will be entering
4 the building.

5 A couple of overviews, just showing
6 how the building, again, sit on the site. I'm going to
7 go through this pretty quickly. I think the images say
8 1,000 words. Again, you can kind of see the screening
9 on the roof, how we're hiding the mechanical equipment,
10 how that building faces the intersection. It interacts
11 with Kane Street and Prospect. A view from the street.
12 Jeff will get into it, but I'll talk about the sites,
13 the plantings. Certainly they're an important part of
14 the design which we try to implement or incorporate
15 into these renderings. Another view at nighttime. A
16 view facing the front of the building as it faces the
17 parking lot. I guess this would be the east facing
18 facade. Then another few of that same facade, just
19 giving different angles, to really understand the
20 building.

21 Materials, like I mentioned, are
22 durable. They're brick veneer, metal siding. There's
23 a small amount of EIFS, but the EIFS is held up high on
24 the building, so there's no immediate damage available
25 to it.

1 And then the next is the site plan,
2 which I'll introduce Jeff Bord to you.

3 MR. BORD: Good evening. For the
4 record, my name is Jeff Bord, professional engineer in
5 the state of Connecticut at Bohler at 65 LaSalle Road,
6 West Hartford, Connecticut.

7 What you're seeing on the screen
8 here is some existing conditions and it kind of blows
9 up the area in question on the southeast corner, just
10 really showing that it is just a parking lot right now
11 of the outskirts of this development. One thing to
12 know is that we are -- the existing drainage is
13 untreated currently through the parking lot. There's a
14 few catch basins in the corner here and everything
15 exits out towards Kane Street. In this existing
16 condition, there's no water quality treatment in place
17 for what's currently getting into the water system.
18 That's pretty important as we move forward here.

19 Another thing to note is that we are
20 maintaining access to the signalized intersection on
21 Prospect, and there's an existing signalized
22 intersection Kane Street, as well, that connects to the
23 on and off ramps. Both of those are staying the same.
24 Once we get through local approval, we do have to
25 submit to the DOT for Office of State Traffic

1 Administration administrative decision they call it,
2 just to amend the existing Certificate in Place, so
3 that will have to -- once we get through local
4 entitlements.

5 Expanding on what Chris showed you,
6 what you're seeing here is just the colorized version
7 of the site plan within the packet that we submitted.
8 We think we turned on the landscaping as we felt that,
9 given that this is the Gateway to West Hartford, this
10 corner proves really important, and we sent one of our
11 landscape architects out onsite to perform a tree study
12 of the existing vegetation along Prospect and Kane and,
13 where we can, we have left several of those trees in
14 place, and then basically supplemented landscaping
15 around it for what turned out to be a rather robust
16 plan that Chris and his team captured pretty good in
17 the renderings, as well.

18 The Chipotle itself is 2,400 square
19 feet. They have what they call a mobile order pickup
20 window, not necessarily a drive-through, although
21 technically, by definition, it is. They call it their
22 Chipotlane, where you're not actually -- technically,
23 you're not ordering from a menu board onsite. It's
24 mobile order. It's simply a pickup. So the average
25 queue that you'd normally expect for another average

1 fast food restaurant might be significant, whereas
2 these, there's multiple studies, they have an average
3 queue of six cars, and you'll get a text message when
4 you mobile order is ready and you get in line. It's a
5 pretty efficient manner.

6 One other thing that came up, and
7 we've been working on this now for several months in
8 coordination with town staff, specifically the design
9 review committee and Todd and his staff, to come up
10 with the layout that you're seeing here. We have
11 prepared several iterations of this design plan, but to
12 get the drive-through to meet the regulations, this is
13 where we settled where we do not have a drive aisle
14 circulating around the building in this location.
15 Original design plans actually had it wrapping the
16 corner, which was not consistent with the town's
17 regulations for a drive-through. What that allowed us
18 to do was present the pedestrian connectivity to that
19 front area and here, where we provided a sidewalk down
20 to Kane, and we've also provided a sidewalk out to
21 Prospect to really highlight that corner, in addition
22 to all the screening that was done.

23 One of the other comments that came
24 up is regarding the patio here. We originally had it
25 all fronting on Kane Street and, through the design

1 review process, we moved it around the corner and put a
2 portion of it towards that other side, as well. So
3 those were all things that we worked through with town
4 staff as we were developing the plan for that.

5 There's three accessible stalls
6 onsite. We are providing EV charging stations, and I
7 know one of the outstanding comments is that we have to
8 provide adequate EV charges for up to five cars. We
9 currently show two, and that was one of the conditions
10 that Pat had mentioned in the most recent letter.
11 We're not opposed to providing five. We typically just
12 provide the future conduit in the event that they're
13 needed moving forward.

14 I mentioned drainage earlier. One
15 of the big bonuses on something like this, when you are
16 doing an infill, is that, and it's not often that I get
17 to say this, but we're reducing impervious coverage by
18 8,000 square feet. There's two good things with that;
19 not only the reduction in impervious, but also we're
20 treating water quality through a hydrator and a
21 separator in the location down in the corner here where
22 we're basically using the existing drainage patterns on
23 site and then reducing all the peak flows and volumes
24 2, 10, 25, 100-year storm. So all that's in the Storm
25 Water Quality Manual. It's been reviewed by the

1 engineering department and provides a vast improvement
2 from a drainage standpoint from what's out there today.

3 Utilities, we are getting electric
4 that goes out to Prospect. There's a pole on the
5 corner here and then sewer, gas, and water all tile
6 into the Kane Street site to existing utilities on our
7 side of the street for Kane.

8 I did mention landscaping already.
9 I know we do have a variety of canopy trees, ornamental
10 trees, shrubs, not only through the site but -- not
11 only on the corner but also throughout site, as well.
12 These are all existing trees along the existing drive
13 aisle coming in. We simply supplemented without taking
14 out existing trees.

15 With regards to erosion and sediment
16 control, we did provide a detailed plan. We'll have
17 Siltsacks on all the catch basins, there will be silt
18 fencing throughout the duration of construction. We
19 provided an Operation & Maintenance Manual for the
20 owner to maintain all of those facilities throughout
21 the duration of the project and building.

22 So, with that, I'll turn it over to
23 Kari to close, and after that we'll be open for any
24 questions you guys have.

25 MS. OLSON: So, again, I just wanted

1 to highlight a couple of things that Jeff and Chris
2 mentioned. The Chipotlane, again, it is not an order
3 lane, it is not a payment lane. Everything is done via
4 application. So it literally is a pickup window. So,
5 again, the queuing is really not a huge issue with
6 this. Notwithstanding, we have designed this to meet
7 your queuing requirement for a typical drive-through
8 window.

9 The other think I want to really
10 highlight that I think we kind of glossed over is the
11 beautiful patio that is being installed that faces both
12 Kane Street and Prospect Street and has direct access
13 from the street sidewalk. Again, to make this sort of
14 a walkable and welcoming environment for people to come
15 and take advantage of the Chipotle and whatever retail
16 restaurants end up going into the rest of the building.

17 And then, lastly, to do my legal
18 bit, and just say we feel strongly that this is
19 consistent with our objective and, as far as amending
20 the SED, because it is consistent with your
21 comprehensive zoning plan, in that it not only meets
22 the zoning regulations, but we are proposing uses that
23 are allowed, and the underlying -- then this SED, in
24 particular, and it also fosters your plan of
25 conversation and development, and I'm going to quote,

1 "In that it promotes growth and retention of existing
2 businesses and development of new business
3 opportunities to strengthen the community tax base in
4 an innovative manner, while preserving and protecting
5 the residential character of surrounding
6 neighborhoods." And, as I said, you have all been
7 pivotal in the transformation of this plaza, and we ask
8 that you continue to collaborate with us and that you
9 approve the application.

10 Now, with that, are there any
11 questions?

12 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you, Attorney
13 Olson. We have a first few things to go through. Mr.
14 Clerk, have you received any written comments?

15 MR. DAVIDOFF: Yes, Madam Mayor. We
16 received a letter dated August 22, 2023 from the West
17 Hartford Chamber of Commerce in support of the
18 application.

19 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
20 Davidoff. And the signup sheet? We happen to have Mr.
21 Conway. Come on up.

22 MR. CONWAY: Good evening, Madam
23 Mayor and council members. For the record, my name is
24 Christopher Conway. I'm the president and CEO of the
25 West Hartford Chamber of Commerce. At 948 Farmington

1 Avenue.

2 On August 3, 2023, Greg Oshins of
3 DLC Management Corporation and Jeff Bord of Bohler
4 Engineering -- economic development committee and
5 provided a detailed overview of their proposal for an
6 additional building in the southeast corner of Prospect
7 Plaza on the corner of Prospect Avenue and Kane Street.
8 They are seeking an amendment to the plaza special
9 development district. The economic development
10 committee voted to recognize the chamber's executive
11 committee fully endorse the proposal, which they did.

12 The chambers this will be a welcome
13 addition to the plaza. With are excited to see new
14 development in our often overlooked part of town. The
15 recent successful openings of Floor & Decor and Planet
16 Fitness are excellent examples of new investments. Mr.
17 Oshins shared that one of the intended tenants for this
18 new building is Chipotle. Not only will this be an
19 added amenity for local residents and visitors, it will
20 also create jobs for the building phase and with the
21 future tenants of the building. For these reasons, the
22 West Hartford Chamber urges the town council to approve
23 DLC management's request to add an additional building
24 to the southeast corner of Prospect Plaza.

25 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you.

1 MR. COURSEY: Thank you, Madam
2 Mayor. For the record, my name is Chuck Coursey. I
3 live at 21 Walbridge Road, West Hartford. I am vice
4 chair -- second vice chair of the West Hartford Chamber
5 and chair of the Economic Development Committee for the
6 chamber.

7 Just to reiterate some of the things
8 that Chris said. For me, in particular, I'm very
9 excited about this project and support it
10 wholeheartedly, because this part of West Hartford has
11 not seen a lot of investment in quite some time. The
12 applicant should be commended for what they're done in
13 recent years with Floor & Decor and the gym and what
14 we're also see across the street at the new Starbucks,
15 even our friends in Hartford. So it's great to see
16 that investment -- that needed investment coming to
17 this part of town, especially in West Hartford and
18 Hartford on the Hartford line.

19 The other point I wanted to stress
20 was that this also fits the town's plan of conservation
21 and development in that it encourages, the plan does,
22 POCD, encourages development on out-parcels in big
23 plazas. This council and past councils have seen fit
24 to encourage that type of development, whether you're
25 the Chick-fil-A on New Park or Olive Garden at Corbin's

1 Corner and, most recently, the Starbucks down the
2 street on South Main Street. So it's great to see this
3 type of investment. It looks beautiful, it's going to
4 enhance the neighborhood, and we welcome even more
5 investment as the years come along. Thank you very
6 much.

7 MAYOR CANTOR: Is there anybody else
8 in the audience that wants to -- okay. Then we'll go
9 to questions by the counsel.

10 I'm going to start with a question,
11 because this is something that has been an issue that
12 we're been dealing with and many communities have since
13 the pandemic. Trash, where trash is located, and how
14 it is protected and, partly, that is related to rodents
15 and, actually, we have bears roaming, too, around in
16 commercial areas, as well. And so that's important and
17 also with construction, the potentially being down and
18 maybe creating some rodent activity, I just want to
19 know how that will be handled, as well.

20 MS. OLSON: So we've been informed
21 that staff has provided some conditions of approval,
22 one of which is a significant requirement for an
23 ongoing maintenance plan, as well as a pest analysis
24 prior to construction. That's one of the conditions.
25 We have not objected to those conditions at all. I

1 just wanted to point out here, I don't know -- do you
2 see --

3 MAYOR CANTOR: I think you have to
4 speak into the mic so they can catch you, so just turn
5 it a little.

6 MS. OLSON: Sorry. So what I'm
7 pointing at here is the screen area for any trash that
8 is -- so it's all screened, it's all enclosed. There
9 will be obviously regular pickup in accordance with the
10 timeline and the conditions that are being imposed but,
11 as I said, again, there will be a maintenance plan in
12 place that will address your concerns, and there will
13 be that pre-construction pest analysis.

14 MR. OSHINS: If I may, and Jeff Bord
15 could probably speak to this as well. We're providing
16 a trash enclosure sufficient for all three tenants at
17 the new proposed building, and to Kari's point that she
18 made, our construction process and our ongoing
19 management of the property will be done according to
20 best practices. As you know, we've been a long-term
21 owner of the property and we managed the property
22 in-house through our own team, and so we'll provide any
23 detail that the town requires to make them feel
24 comfortable and, of course, it's always a conversation,
25 as things come up, to always address those. We're not

1 absentee, we're involved and we're here.

2 MAYOR CANTOR: My last question is
3 the snow removal. You, obviously, have a lot of
4 screening area, so I'm guessing that that would be
5 areas where you could pile snow in the event we have a
6 heavy snow winter.

7 MS. OLSON: We're aware of the fact
8 that your current regulations and, indeed, the
9 conditions of approval would require the stacking of
10 snow other than in parking spaces. As you can see, we
11 have quite a bit of green scape. You heard Jeff say
12 that we've increased the green scape by 8,000 square,
13 feet. So we do have adequate snow storage area.

14 MAYOR CANTOR: Okay. Questions from
15 counsel? Miss Blanks.

16 MS. BLANKS: Thank you, Madam Mayor.
17 Thank you to the applicant for their presentation.
18 This is a very good proposed application before the
19 council. I live in this area, so I'm going to ask you
20 some questions based on my experience.

21 In terms of the pickup window that
22 you're calling a non drive-through, when the orders
23 come in and they pick up, it's hard to see where they
24 exit. So when they exit, are they exiting to the right
25 and then going back towards the parking lot and then

1 coming out to Kane Street? How do they exit on the
2 mobile pickup order?

3 MS. OLSON: So they would come in
4 through this entrance, they would enter the queue for
5 pickup, and then they would exit, and it's like a
6 horseshoe, up and out. And, as you know, this plaza
7 has two signalized entrances and exits, so what this
8 does is it facilitates sort of this one way in and out
9 right to the signalized light. They can go this way or
10 that way. They won't be mixing with the rest of the
11 parking area. They just come in and then they go out.

12 MS. BLANKS: Thank you. The other
13 question is for the pedestrians that are walking. So I
14 notice that you have a walk area from Kane Street up to
15 where the patio is located, and I'm going to guess the
16 entrance that is -- looks like perhaps on the north
17 side of the building, but my concern really is that is
18 a major -- I don't even know if the state considers
19 that a major highway area, which is Kane Street
20 directly across from Starbucks. What I noticed is a
21 lot of people cross over from Starbucks, Kane Street
22 over to the Prospect Plaza side. I see the walkway
23 closer to Prospect, that 4-way stop, and perhaps this
24 is even a town question, Rick. Could there be a
25 walkway where you have the walkway for the walk up to

1 Starbucks -- I mean the walk up to Chipotle? And the
2 only reason I say that is because of Starbucks, there's
3 been increased activity in foot track. From a public
4 safety standpoint, you have cars coming off of the
5 highway taking that right-hand turn. They don't always
6 stop. I'm fearful that there's going to be an
7 accident soon. So just with the activity that's coming
8 up with Chipotle, has anybody considered that.

9 MR. OSHINS: For clarity, the
10 walkway that we've constructed connects down to the
11 existing sidewalk. Jeff from Bohler can speak very
12 well to this, because he was instrumental in designing
13 it.

14 MS. OLSON: I would just make also
15 the point that I'm going to point to before Jeff talks.
16 This sidewalk and this sidewalk here going up towards
17 the existing building of Floor & Decor, that is
18 preexisting and we are asked to keep that. So the only
19 thing that's really new is the connection to the
20 outdoor seating patio.

21 MR. BORD: That existing sidewalk --
22 the only proposed sidewalk that we're creating is
23 basically right here, and it goes up and there's a set
24 of stairs that get onto the patio area. This is all an
25 existing condition that we just designed and left as

1 is.

2 To your point, one of the things we
3 have to do, because of the DOT component to this and
4 how large this site, is any time you have over 200
5 parking spaces or 100,000 square feet and square
6 footage of building, you have to submit to the DOT, so
7 we're required to submit our traffic study, which we
8 have prepared by a licensed traffic engineer to the
9 DOT, and they're going to review, not only this
10 intersection, they're going to review this signal,
11 they'll review the on and off-ramp signal, so they're
12 going to look at it holistically as if it's the
13 entirety of the property, and then they're going to
14 give us comments on based on what they're seeing.

15 MS. BLANKS: Thank you. I
16 appreciate that.

17 MAYOR CANTOR: Mr. Cortes.

18 MR. CORTES: I have two questions.
19 One is easier than the other. I'll go with the easier
20 one. Since we're building this from the ground up,
21 this is the best opportunity to produce the best
22 product as possible. Has there been any thoughts in
23 regards to like adding solar panels or stuff that is
24 more energy efficient or is it not worth it?

25 MR. OSHINS: Generally speaking, and

1 it's interesting that you raised the point. I'm
2 working on an initiative with DOT management for a
3 variety of our properties on implementing solar panels
4 at a number of properties. Generally speaking, the
5 system size needs to be significantly larger than a
6 building of this size in order to get to the critical
7 math that's makes it economical bot for the solar
8 developer and for the owners of the building.

9 There are circumstances, of course,
10 where there owners who opt to put solar panels on
11 billings of this size. From our perspective, this
12 building, taken in the abstract, is likely too small.
13 That's not to rule out in the future, A, as technology
14 evolves and changes and, B, as our plans as it relates
15 to solar for the broader Prospect Plaza evolve, it
16 could become something that we would consider in the
17 future.

18 MR. CORTES: And then my second
19 concern, it is with the walkway. So my first job was
20 Edwards Supermarket right there, so I'm very familiar
21 with the plaza, and I worked at a McDonald's across
22 the. I frequently washed by car right across from
23 there, and that's not a wash and go, so to speak. It's
24 almost like a detail. So it backs up. That gets
25 extremely busy, and me and my wife were just talking

1 about this today, it was kind of funny, that while out
2 car is being washed, we can go to Starbucks and how
3 great that is and now there's going to be a Chipotle
4 across the street, so we can actually cross the street
5 to the Chipotle, and as the -- where the line of cars
6 are right there across the street at the car wash,
7 there's some benches there and how inviting that
8 walkway is, rather than going to the corner, going
9 right across. You have the preexisting one and then
10 you guys kind of connect it to the entrance. I was
11 wondering why -- is it a better way to make it more
12 inviting to utilize a crosswalk and kind of come in at
13 an angle that way. Especially with the stuff going on
14 in town with Vision Zero, it looks super inviting to
15 just to go right across the street and not go to the
16 corner. So my thing is would a pedestrian get hit if
17 we made a more inviting walkway that kind of went in at
18 an angle.

19 MS. OLSON: So you're saying
20 basically eliminate --

21 MR. CORTES: Not eliminate the
22 existing, but don't add.

23 MS. OLSON: Eliminate the connection
24 here and maybe have it go down on an angle like this?

25 MR. BORD: Were you suggesting

1 coming off the corner with a more direct sidewalk so
2 that when you cross the street, you're not having to
3 walk this way or this way and up?

4 MR. CORTES: Yeah. Even if it went
5 on an angle to that corner, so closer to that crosswalk
6 there, and then have more green stuff where you guys
7 are adding the new one. That way it's not inviting.
8 That way when I go look and go I've got to go between
9 those bushes, I'm actually going to walk to the corner
10 and use this nice sidewalk to go in.

11 MR. BORD: I know on that end, from
12 a topography standpoint, that would have to be
13 explored. I don't think it would really change the
14 intent of the design if it were to come around the
15 corner here. I would just update the landscaping and
16 pay particular attention to how all this area is from a
17 landscaping standpoint; to your point, if you were
18 crossing the street and that's a more direct route.
19 The reason we left this one here, I think it needs to
20 stay, is because that is an existing sidewalk that it
21 gets into the plaza, so we simply added the stairs
22 there. It might be, in lieu of this, maybe that just
23 coming down a little closer to the corner. It's fully
24 functional.

25 MR. CORTES: You have the

1 landscaping there, so you're not feeling -- it's just
2 as inviting to use the newer sidewalk or move it over
3 to the crosswalk. That's all. Thank you.

4 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you Cortes.
5 Mr. Sweeney.

6 MR. SWEENEY: Thank you, Madam
7 Mayor. So to the waiting line, so you spoke to how it
8 works, so it's only on-line orders. Does Chipotle
9 allow Ubers to go through that line?

10 MR. OSHINS: Only orders that -- so
11 there's no commerce that happens at that window is the
12 best way to put it. There's no taking of money.

13 MR. SWEENEY: Chipotle now is like a
14 huge Uber takeout area, and if you go to Chipotle over
15 here, you're basically waiting in line. Are Uber
16 drivers picking up there? So I don't know if that line
17 is there just for people picking up, or is it
18 overcrowded? If you compare this to, if you go further
19 down the line, to Chick-fil-A, that line bends multiple
20 times when you go into that and that's all just take
21 out. They do exchange. But if you add Uber to this,
22 as opposed just Chipotle, I think you're looking at a
23 much different line.

24 MR. BORD: We do a lot of work with
25 Chipotle directly and they perform studies, even in the

1 traffic study they referenced it, but I can't speak to
2 what other stores are doing, whether it's a mix of
3 both. I know a lot of other stores without the
4 drive-through have the Uber Eats pick up in the front
5 in the store. I can tell you that, if that's
6 happening, that same queuing analysis has been
7 completed throughout the country, and if there's a case
8 where both of those are happening, there's six or seven
9 cars on average.

10 MR. SWEENEY: I don't have a problem
11 with it. I would imagine that could cause a problem.

12 MR. BORD: It's one of the few fast
13 food restaurants that we work with where the efficiency
14 of this pick up, you just pull up to the window, and
15 they have your order ready and you're gone. One of the
16 things I didn't mention in my presentation, one of the
17 town comments that came up is to make sure we were
18 providing a couple spaces outside of that to circulate
19 and exit, and that was also something that we added, in
20 concert with the town.

21 MR. SWEENEY: Where that current
22 vegetation that you're putting in, the new treeline
23 that you're putting in, there are currently other trees
24 in that dark brown area, or whatever that is, are you
25 guys going to remove trees that are there or just add

1 to what's there.

2 MR. BORD: I had a professional
3 landscape architect go out on site here, and he looked
4 at this and he doesn't like to eliminate trees if
5 they're matured and in good shape. There was two
6 species of trees, they were 12 to 18-inch trees. I
7 think of the five or six that were there, only one or
8 two were coming out, and that was due to the fact that
9 they looked as if they were in disrepair and not in
10 great shape. All the mature trees that were in good
11 condition are remaining and we're just adding to them.

12 MR. SWEENEY: Whatever you may
13 decide to do, what is the lighting aspect going to be?
14 Because if you're going to have that into that corner,
15 I think it would be best if they're all involved with
16 that well lit open area, particularly if you keep the
17 current vegetation, and I'm just looking at it. If you
18 keep the current trees there and you had additional
19 trees there, you are creating significant blind spots
20 in that area, and if you're not also having it well lit
21 during that, that's also something to keep in mind.
22 I'm sure you have the downward lights, which is great.
23 At that particular spot, for what my colleagues both
24 mentioned earlier, is the traffic and just the general
25 foot traffic that will be over there at that time, I

1 think that it's important that that is kind of -- while
2 there is a lot of vegetation that that be as well lit
3 because Chipotle is open until like 10 or so? I would
4 just like to know if you guys were to zigzag that line,
5 what kind of lighting that is. I looked through the
6 sketches, and I don't really so what kind of lights.

7 MR. BORD: The site itself is the
8 slim LED fixtures that are all compliant. A lot of
9 times with the sidewalks if we shifted that and tweaked
10 it to come closer to the corner, there would probably
11 be a series of pedestrian -- that would light the
12 sidewalk in that location, coupled with that fact that
13 in our modeling, we don't model any of the existing
14 lights on Prospect or Kane, so what we're providing was
15 lighting the site sufficiently, and that would be part
16 of what we submit to the town.

17 MR. SWEENEY: Thank you.

18 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
19 Sweeney. Mr. Tucker.

20 MR. TUCKER: Good evening. How are
21 you tonight? Thank you for the comprehensive
22 presentation, and I had a couple of questions. I'm a
23 little confused about the trees. I know that you are
24 maintaining some trees. How many trees are you
25 actually adding, and maybe you could just indicate

1 where those are.

2 MR. BORD: Give me one second here.
3 I can tell you we're saving four or five along the
4 front edge both on Kane and on Prospect, and when you
5 count some of these other trees up on the north side,
6 there's three or four along this side here, and then,
7 as far as the quantity goes, I know this one is
8 starting to look more like a bird sanctuary here, so
9 there's a lot of trees. Just give me one second.

10 So canopy trees, there's going to be
11 eight total, ornamental trees, they're on the smaller
12 side, there's ten of those. There's 110 shrubs, 11
13 evergreen shrubs, 500 some-odd ornamental grasses, a
14 lot of ground cover, and then 17 perennials. So
15 there's quite a bit of landscaping, more so than we
16 would normally provide on this, we do so specifically
17 at the direction of the landscape architect, just
18 because of where this sat relative to the corner here.

19 MR. TUCKER: I think that is a
20 positive addition, considering that it is very much --
21 very large expanse of parking lot and it does break it
22 up. Have you given thought to using ligneous plantings
23 in your landscape architect plans?

24 MR. BORD: We have. I'd like to say
25 we one of the better landscape architects in the state,

1 and he pulled from a list of names. When he was
2 onsite, he also looked for, again, some of the existing
3 trees, what was dying and what was thriving and then
4 looked to design around that to really accentuate that
5 corner. So I would say I have the utmost confidence in
6 our team when it comes to landscaping.

7 MR. TUCKER: The additional things
8 that you're planting are native?

9 MR. BORD: Correct.

10 MR. TUCKER: Thank you. Miss Polun.

11 MS. POLUN: Thank you so much for
12 your presentation. I have a question about the
13 crosswalk to nowhere. So if you go through the
14 Chipotlane, before you make the turnaround, where does
15 that crosswalk go?

16 MR. BORD: That crosswalk is used
17 very sparingly in the sense that we have -- it's
18 basically for the trash removal for the Chipotle. The
19 way that the interior of the building is laid out,
20 there's not rear door to the back, so that was a
21 specific request from the tenant, where they would
22 wheel out their trash to the receptacle in this corner,
23 as opposed to wheeling it -- wheeling a garbage bin
24 through the patio and then in front of two other retail
25 spaces in to then cross and go back here. So that was

1 a specific tenant request that came up.

2 MS. POLUN: So they come out the
3 back door, they cross the crosswalk and then they kind
4 of walk across the parking spaces?

5 MR. BORD: They walk up the end of
6 the parking spaces which, I guess, is common with them.
7 We worked through that with them. Where it would have
8 been a problem is if there was not already an existing
9 sidewalk here that went into the center and then people
10 were invited to go that way more so, people can still
11 utilize that no differently than any other plaza where
12 you have to cross to get over to the parking. In most
13 cases in different retail plazas and restaurants, where
14 you park and then walk across a drive aisle, like at
15 McDonald's or something, you don't have a crosswalk, so
16 it's almost an added benefit to have those spaces in
17 the read for employee parking in the back.

18 MS. POLUN: Since we're on
19 crosswalks, have you given any thought to adding a
20 crosswalk at the end of the sidewalk at the top of
21 the -- yep. Over to the next. What's the building
22 that's right up above it.

23 MS. OLSON: That would be --
24 straight up is going to be the existing retail plaza
25 building but just to the right, where you see the

1 parking spaces that are going at kind of an angle,
2 that's the front parking area, so where that leads to,
3 effectively, is the rest of the parking lot that's s
4 both the strip plaza, as well as Floor & Decor.

5 MS. POLUN: It feels like it might
6 be a benefit to the tenants if we put a crosswalk there
7 and made it so we're inviting people to walk over to
8 the restaurant. It's just an idea.

9 MR. OSHINS: Thank you very much.

10 MAYOR CANTOR: Mr. Khatiwada.

11 MR. KHATIWADA: Good evening,
12 everyone. It is so exciting to hear some of the new
13 development plan in our town, so I wish we can talk all
14 the time about development plans for our town, so I'm
15 very excited. I hope everybody is excited about it.

16 I know a lot of -- I looked
17 through -- there's going to be multiple questions, so
18 since it's come to our table, so what we see, what we
19 say. So if there's a way to improve or do something,
20 you might do it; if not, it still is fine. I have a
21 small couple of things to say about this plan, as I
22 overview it.

23 So first of all, as we deal with our
24 town and the infrastructure and everything else, we
25 invite more traffic on our roads, so I'm looking at

1 this road and I'm going through the Prospect and Kane,
2 there's only one lane going toward and three coming
3 inwards, obviously from the highway. But in the event
4 that if we realize we're adding more traffic, more
5 people, and more business, if in the event the road
6 needs to be expanded more, this building would be
7 acceptable to expand the road.

8 MR. BORD: So, I can say that DOT
9 process where sometimes we have to go to DOT for an
10 application in this event, exactly what you're
11 describing thee, if there's any volume issues, that's
12 one of the first thing they look at when they get that
13 process. If they did have, based on our data and the
14 traffic report, if there were issues at the signalized
15 intersection, they would make Greg and I revise this
16 plan and do that work with them, should it not be
17 adequate.

18 If you're talking, and I think I
19 heard you correctly, if, in fact, somehow in the future
20 they come an revise this road and they need -- I think
21 in this instance we're actually fortunate in that,
22 unlike a lot of developments where the parking lot
23 comes right up to the edge of the development. In this
24 case, we do have a decent amount of landscaping. Even
25 if there was 5 to 10-foot taking, which would be a

1 whole process in itself, that would be something that
2 Greg has seen that that could happen. You can see
3 what's shown in the different color green here -- it's
4 actually about 15 to 20 feet off the road edge right
5 now. So there is some room.

6 MR. KHATIWADA: I'm glad. So my
7 next question is is there any possibility to put a
8 beautiful welcome sign right in this corner -- east
9 corner of the property here? Welcome to West Hartford.
10 Because the entrance from the inside to West Hartford,
11 so that's going to show some beauty.

12 MR. OSHINS: I can certainly talk to
13 my side about that, and there could quite possibly be a
14 way to work with the town on that. Sure.

15 MR. KHATIWADA: Thank you very much.

16 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you. Any other
17 questions? Mr. Wenograd.

18 MR. WENOGRAD: Thank you very much.
19 This is an exciting project, and I was thrilled to see
20 some of our parking desert be replaced.

21 You mentioned the impact on water
22 runoff. I did see the report, but can you kind of tell
23 us, do you have any estimate as to how much water is
24 being diverted or not, hard numbers in terms of
25 reducing the amount of water going into the storm

1 drain.

2 MR. BORD: I don't have a copy of
3 the drainage report, I know we provided one. So every
4 storm event, the engineer actually asks for two
5 additional storm events than we usually do. We
6 provided them and the flows are being met or reduced in
7 all cases and, not only met and reduced, also cleaned.
8 Part of what's happening right now is the conveyance
9 system that comes down to a structure about here, and
10 then that storm pipe that services this whole parking
11 lot, which is also untreated, comes out and directly
12 into the drainage system along Kane. What we've done
13 is we cut that pipe in the parking lot here in the
14 northeast corner, diverted it around the building, down
15 and then all of the catch basins we provide throughout
16 the site, and all of this parking area now goes through
17 a separator, is treated, cleaned before it gets
18 discharged. So in addition to that 8,000 square foot
19 reduction -- that's now less than what it was now.

20 MR. WENOGRAD: Thank you, and that's
21 great. We all know up here anything that we can do to
22 reduce our stormwater is going to be very advantageous
23 and maybe prevent -- do enough of these and maybe we
24 can cut down some of the costs.

25 The other thing I just wanted to

1 note, and I couldn't quite figure out where it was, but
2 I did notice that you agreed to put bike facilities
3 onsite per the recommendation of your staff. I just
4 wanted you to point out where those are.

5 MR. BORD: I think we had planned on
6 one up in this corner here, because that sidewalk no
7 longer came around the side of the building. I'll have
8 to verify that, though, on the plans. I know we did
9 add it as par of the town's comments.

10 MR. WENOGRAD: Thank you very much.
11 I'm sorry, one more thing. I'm not going to ask you
12 again to move the sidewalk. I agree with my
13 colleagues. We got a lot of cooks involved, but I do
14 appreciate your openness to working on that. And I
15 think it's going to be an attractive development for
16 pedestrians, so anything you can do is certainly going
17 to be appreciated. Thank you.

18 MAYOR CANTOR: Anymore questions?
19 Ms. McGinnis.

20 MS. MCGINNIS: Thank you so much for
21 the presentation. It was really good. I think this
22 looks great.

23 How many outdoor trash receptacles,
24 trash cans, are there going to be? Not the dumpsters,
25 but just outside.

1 MR. BORD: You're talking about
2 surrounding the building?

3 MS. MCGINNIS: Yes.

4 MR. BORD: Probably a few I would
5 imagine.

6 MR. OSHINS: I don't have that
7 detail at my fingertips.

8 MS. MCGINNIS: I assume they'll be
9 on the patios, too.

10 MR. OSHINS: I couldn't tell you
11 with any certainty. I would imagine so, yes.

12 MS. MCGINNIS: Thank you.

13 MAYOR CANTOR: Anything else from
14 the council?

15 MS. BLANKS: I have one more
16 question. This is from the mayor's questions in terms
17 the trash receptacles. So about how many feet are
18 employees walking down to discard the trash and how
19 high are the screens? And the reason why I bring that
20 up is because there's a number of homeowners and
21 residents in that area who with experiencing problems
22 with rodent activity, and I know you said that, you
23 know, you guys are on top of it, but I'm just curious
24 in terms of how far up is the screen and how far down,
25 and I'm especially thinking, during our blizzard

1 months, how far down do the employees have to walk to
2 get rid of the garbage?

3 MR. BORD: It's about 90 to 100 feet
4 to get up to this area, and I believe this is 6 feet in
5 height as far as the screening goes. We worked with
6 the design review committee to also screen this.
7 There's a significant amount of effort to try to screen
8 this from view, on top of it already being an
9 attractive screening material, and then the gates in
10 front, which would be closed as well. So it's about
11 100 feet from here to there.

12 MS. BLANKS: Thank you.

13 MAYOR CANTOR: Mr. Tucker.

14 MR. TUCKER: Thank you. Is there
15 outdoor dining that's contemplated here, and can you
16 talk a little bit about what that would look like and
17 exactly where that would be on the site map.

18 MR. BORD: In working with Design
19 Review Committee, we landed on this spot right here,
20 where the patio is roughly 600 square feet, wraps the
21 corner, and there there's no waiters or waitresses that
22 come out to the patio. You pick up your food, come out
23 and grab one of the few tables that's available if you
24 want to sit outside.

25 MR. TUCKER: Would there, I would

1 presume, some kind of trash receptacle or something.

2 MR. BORD: I would imagine there
3 would be something somewhere on this patio as far as
4 that and whether or not we want to see more. I assume
5 that would work with the tenants.

6 MR. TUCKER: Aside from the planned
7 restaurant, there's two additional slots for businesses
8 and, obviously, you may not be in a position to name
9 names, but do you have any, you know, sort of idea of
10 what you're looking for or what kind of businesses
11 might go into those two slots.

12 MR. OSHINS: We're not at a point
13 where I can be specific as to names that we mentioned.
14 I can tell you that there will be first class
15 retail/restaurant uses. The way we're viewing -- this
16 is high value retail space that needs good visibility
17 on the corner, as it has, so we're seeing household
18 name type retail restaurant uses in these spaces.

19 MR. TUCKER: Thank you.

20 MAYOR CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
21 Tucker. Any more questions from the counsel? Then I
22 will read into the record letter dated August 11, 2023,
23 the Town Planning and Zoning Commission recommending
24 approval, letter dated July 21, 2023 from Design Review
25 Advisory Committee recommending approval, letter dated

1 August 3, 2023 from the Capital Region Council for
2 Governments finding no apparent conflict in the
3 regional plans and policies or the concerns of the
4 neighboring towns.

5 And our corporation counsel -- we're
6 going to adjourn. We're going to take a 5-minute break
7 before we --

8 MR. DODGE: Madam Mayor, could I
9 just ask prior to adjournment if we could take a brief
10 recess before we adjourn the public hearing.

11 MAYOR CANTOR: Okay. Five minutes
12 and let's be back in our seats. Thank you.

13 (Whereupon, a recess was taken from
14 7:00 p.m. until 7:07 p.m.)

15 MAYOR CANTOR: I need to just
16 adjourn; correct?

17 MR. DODGE: Yes.

18 MAYOR CANTOR: We are now adjourning
19 the public hearing, and we are going to start the
20 council meeting.

21 (Whereupon, the hearing was
22 adjourned at 7:08 p.m.)
23
24
25

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 43 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 10th day of September, 2023.



Debra A. Chasse, CSR
Notary Public
State of Connecticut

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