

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

February 27, 2024, 7 p.m.,

Legislative Chambers

**Re: Application Filed on Behalf of INSPIRED
BY OPPORTUNITY, LLC, Lessee of Property
Commonly Known as Wendy's Restaurant, to
Modify Special Design District #29 (SDD#29)
Located at 331 South Road to Demolish the
Existing Restaurant Building and Create a New
2,680 Square-Foot Restaurant Building with
Drive-Through Facility.**

**Associated Modifications Include the
Reconfiguration of the Parking Layout and
Drive Aisles and New Landscaping, Signage,
and Stormwater and Sanitary Sewer
Improvements.**

A p p e a r a n c e s:

Town Council Members Present:

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR

MARK ZYDANOWICZ

ALBERTO CORTES

CAROL BLANKS

BEN WENOGRAD

MARY FAY

TIFFANI MCGINNIS

DEB POLUN

BARRY WALTERS

Town Manager

RICK LEDWITH

Corporation Counsel

DALLAS DODGE, ESQ.

Town Clerk

LEON DAVIDOFF

A p p e a r a n c e s: (cont'd)
For the Applicant (INSPIRED BY
OPPORTUNITY, LLC):

ALTER & PEARSON, LLC
701 Hebron Avenue
Glastonbury, Connecticut 06033

By: MEGHAN HOPE, ESQ.
MHope@alterpearson.com
860.652.4020

1 (Begin: 7 p.m.)

2
3 PRESIDENT CANTOR: All right.
4 We are calling the seven o'clock public
5 hearing to order. Everybody's here.

6 This is the application filed
7 on behalf of Inspired by Opportunity, LLC,
8 lessee of property commonly known as Wendy's
9 Restaurant to modify Special Development
10 District Number 29, located at 331 South
11 Road, to demolish the existing restaurant
12 building and create a new 2,680 square-foot
13 restaurant building with drive-through
14 facility.

15 Associated modifications
16 include the reconfiguration of the parking
17 layout and drive aisles and new landscaping,
18 signage, stormwater, and sanitary sewer
19 improvements.

20 We'll begin with roll call,
21 Mr. Davidoff.

22 THE CLERK: Good evening,
23 Madam Mayor.

24 Councilman Blanks?

25 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Present.

1 THE CLERK: Mayor Cantor?
2 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Here.
3 THE CLERK: Councilor Cortes?
4 COUNCILOR CORTES: Here.
5 THE CLERK: Councilor Fay?
6 COUNCILOR FAY: Here.
7 THE CLERK:
8 Councilor McGinnis?
9 COUNCILOR MCGINNIS: Here.
10 THE CLERK: Councilor Polun?
11 COUNCILOR POLUN: Here.
12 THE CLERK: Councilor Walters?
13 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Here.
14 THE CLERK:
15 Deputy Mayor Wenograd?
16 COUNCILOR WENOGRAD: Here.
17 THE CLERK:
18 Councilor Zydanowicz?
19 COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ: Here.
20 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you.
21 We'll begin with the
22 presentation. We have a new audio system, so
23 please be patient with us, but we will begin
24 with a presentation from the applicant.
25 MS. HOPE: Good evening. For

1 the record, my name is Meghan Hope. I'm an
2 attorney with Alter & Pearson in Glastonbury.
3 I'm here tonight presenting on behalf of the
4 Applicant, Inspired by Opportunity, LLC.
5 They are the lessee of 331 South Road.
6 That's the current Wendy's Restaurant that's
7 located close to the mall.

8 We're here tonight to request
9 an application for an amendment to SDD Number
10 29. We're proposing to demolish the existing
11 restaurant that's located on site and
12 construct a new, smaller restaurant with a
13 drive-through facility.

14 The Applicant is part of the
15 Meritage Hospitality Group. We do have two
16 representatives of that group here tonight.
17 So if you have any operational questions
18 about the restaurant, we have a few people
19 here who can answer those questions.

20 You'll also be hearing tonight
21 from Kim Masiuk. She's our professional
22 engineer with BL Companies. We have Chuck
23 Corsi who handled our outreach. Anna Pelhank
24 is the senior project engineer; she's with
25 Meritage Hospitality. Mike Dion is our

1 professional traffic engineer, and you'll
2 also be hearing from Josh Wheeler who's our
3 professional landscape architect.

4 So before you on the screen is
5 an aerial view of the site, again the
6 property that I'm sure everyone is familiar
7 with, 331 South Road. It's about 1.23 acres
8 and is somewhat of an island located on its
9 own.

10 To the north is I-84. To the
11 west is a vacant property controlled by the
12 mall. To the south is obviously South Road,
13 and then the northern portion of the West
14 Farms Mall campus. New Britain Avenue is off
15 your screen to the right, but otherwise it's
16 somewhat of an isolated location.

17 I do want to note for the
18 record that the Farmington and West Hartford
19 town line runs directly through the site. So
20 that blue line that you're seeing is the
21 border between the two towns. So we have
22 about half the site in Farmington that's on
23 the west, the other half of the site is in
24 West Hartford on the eastern portion.

25 Prior to filing the

1 application with West Hartford, we did go to
2 Farmington and get all the necessary
3 approvals from them. So we did get approvals
4 from their wetlands commission, planning and
5 zoning commission, and also their zoning
6 board of appeals.

7 The site was originally
8 constructed in 1981. The Town Council
9 approved a change of zone from R-10 to BG,
10 and then SDD, and since that time the
11 restaurant really hasn't changed much. So
12 what you see up on the site currently is how
13 the restaurant was approved by the Town
14 Council, in 1981.

15 That original building, which
16 is the white square located on the site plan,
17 it's a little over 3200 square feet, and it
18 was approved for 108 table seats as a
19 sit-down restaurant. There's obviously no
20 drive-through facilities with the site, and
21 it was approved with about 72 parking spaces.

22 I think what is evident from
23 the site plan, as you can see, somewhat of a
24 change in how we develop sites currently.
25 Back in the eighties, we pushed the buildings

1 back to the rear, pulled the parking in the
2 front. So there was room for improvement
3 when we came in to do the redevelopment of
4 this site. Otherwise, though, it's been
5 pretty original as to how it was approved.

6 So there have been substantial
7 investments obviously made within the area.
8 We've had a lot of improvements at the mall
9 campus, a lot of improvements at Corbin's
10 Corner. And while this location has
11 performed well for Wendy's, they're looking
12 to obviously modernize it and capture some of
13 the other ways that customers are frequenting
14 fast food restaurants, and that has to deal
15 with obviously drive-through traffic, pickup
16 windows, and also being able to accommodate
17 mobile orders, and there really isn't a need
18 for the 108 table seats that was approved
19 more than 30 years ago.

20 So when the engineers started
21 working on the redevelopment of the site
22 plan, they went directly to the new
23 regulation that the Town adopted about
24 drive-through facilities, and really used
25 that as a framework for redeveloping the

1 site.

2 Okay. So while this loads --
3 so what you have here is that aerial image
4 with the new site plan superimposed on it.
5 So as you can see, the building has been
6 pulled further to South Road. That's the
7 brown rectangle closer to the street. It has
8 been reduced in size to 2600 square feet.

9 We also have moved the
10 entrances further apart. So that westerly
11 entrance that is now further into Farmington
12 over here allows us to really create really
13 nice uninterrupted green space along the
14 street.

15 Per the regulation, we do have
16 the pickup window located to the rear of the
17 building. The access point on the site will
18 remain. This is where it is today. And when
19 customers enter, they'll have a choice of
20 entering the drive-through lane, which is
21 here, or they can utilize the bypass lane to
22 go to the parking spaces, either enter the
23 restaurant or to go into one of the mobile
24 pickup parking spaces, which is designated on
25 the site plan.

1 We were able to obviously pull
2 the more streetscape-friendly items forward
3 on the site plan and sort of hide everything
4 else. We do have the trash located directly
5 behind the building that's going to be in a
6 totally enclosed area. All the parking
7 spaces are located within Farmington. And
8 due to the change in the seat count and also
9 the parking regulations, we were able to
10 substantially reduce the parking from what's
11 there now. So you have a big increase in
12 green space overall.

13 I think with that, I'm going
14 to hand it over to Kim Masiuk, our project
15 engineer so she can go through the different
16 civil site elements of the plan.

17 KIM MASIUK: Thank you, Meg.
18 Good evening. My name again
19 is Kim Masiuk. I'm an engineer with BL
20 Companies, and I'm going to walk you through
21 these next few site slides before I turn it
22 over to Chuck, who did our public outreach.

23 A couple additional things
24 that I want to mention on here related to
25 this slide here is over in the bottom right.

1 I just want to point out, this is an existing
2 entrance-only driveway. We're maintaining
3 that, but we're adding a mountable concrete
4 apron here, as well as on the other side so
5 that trucks that come into the site can
6 maneuver into and out of the site, staying in
7 their own lanes. So that's something we're
8 able to address with this project.

9 The other thing also on this
10 slide I wanted to mention is just the
11 connectivity with the additional sidewalk
12 that we provided along the frontage here,
13 coming up to a four-location bike rack that
14 we're going to provide.

15 The other thing -- I know this
16 is on the Farmington side over here on the
17 left, but it's -- a key improvement here is
18 that this edge of paving was distanced about
19 20 feet further away from the wetland. So
20 this cyan line right here represents the
21 upland review area of the wetland that's over
22 here on the west side.

23 Stormwater, currently there
24 there's catch basins that collect the
25 stormwater runoff. They discharge into two

1 points. One is in the bottom right over
2 here, and that's on the West Hartford side,
3 and then the top left on the Farmington side.

4 There's no water quality
5 treatment, no recharge. Again, this is
6 antiquated systems, and with this project we
7 have the opportunity to provide substantial
8 improvements. We will be able to add water
9 quality treatment units prior to discharge.
10 So we'll maintain the pathways, maintain
11 those outfall locations, but we'll be able to
12 add water quality treatment units prior to
13 discharge for removal of total suspended
14 solids. And then we also have in this area
15 here a recharge area for stormwater from the
16 clean roof runoff.

17 So because we're really able
18 to reduce the number of parking spaces. Just
19 because of how the fast food business has
20 evolved recently, we have less of a footprint
21 as far as paving/building, and we have
22 reduced the impervious, increased the green
23 space. And along with that we're able to
24 decrease all the stormwater peak flow rates
25 and volumes and add the water quality

1 treatment.

2 The existing utilities will
3 all -- when we demolish the existing
4 building, they'll all be cut and capped.
5 They run along South Road here, and we'll be
6 able to reuse those in the same locations.
7 The big enhancement with this is that we have
8 the opportunity to connect to the municipal
9 system on the Farmington side for the
10 sanitary sewer.

11 So if you look in the back,
12 we'll have a new grease trap and we'll
13 abandon the existing septic system over here,
14 and again come into the grease trap with the
15 restaurant, and the sanitary flows go down
16 over here to the west, and we can connect to
17 Farmington. So that is -- you can see that's
18 just the extension coming down and going all
19 the way down to across from Woodruff Road.

20 We are going to be providing
21 all new lights. So again, you know this --
22 this facility is old. It has old equipment.
23 It has old lighting. It has old HVAC
24 equipment, and we're going to have the
25 opportunity to upgrade that. The lighting

1 system will be all LED light fixtures.
2 They're 14 feet tall. We have the photometry
3 plan here, obviously that's provided in the
4 package showing how we are preventing
5 spillage. They're dark-sky compliant and
6 they have full cutoff shields.

7 This is just the details for
8 those that go with it that we provided in the
9 package. And I just have to point out our
10 lovely bike rack here that we have that is a
11 Wendy's Frosty -- because I know we were all
12 talking about the Frosty earlier today. So
13 they're just a black -- you can see them
14 actually in that photo, but unique, unique
15 touch.

16 So I'm going to turn it over
17 to Chuck Corsi who did our public outreach.
18 Just a few things to remind you of before we
19 do that. This is a great opportunity. You
20 can see from this picture -- this is out of
21 date. And once you see the renderings,
22 you're going to see esthetically there's
23 improvements, but there's improvements
24 providing, you know, improved service to the
25 community just in how they'll be able to

1 obtain the fast food at the restaurant, and
2 then improvements with traffic, pedestrian
3 safety, stormwater. So multiple improvements
4 come with this approval of this project.

5 So thank you.

6 CHUCK CORSI: Thanks, Kim.

7 Good evening, Madam Mayor,
8 members of the Council. My name is Chuck
9 Corsi. I live at 21 Walbridge Road here in
10 West Hartford. And as Kim said, I was
11 retained by the Applicant to conduct
12 community outreach for this application.

13 Okay. So as you may remember,
14 outreach on projects like this are conducted
15 with property owners and residents within 500
16 feet of the property. So if you look here,
17 we had five homes on Oak Ridge Lane. Right
18 over here to the north on the other side of
19 I-84, Channel 30, NBC Univision, and then of
20 course our neighbors here to the south at
21 West Farms Mall.

22 I also met with the Elmwood
23 Business Association whose territory and area
24 goes from all the way down to the Hartford
25 line up New Britain Avenue through Corbin's

1 Corner and the mall, and also met with the
2 West Hartford Chamber of Commerce.

3 Here's just -- and Meg talked
4 a little bit about this, but this was helpful
5 in talking about the difference between the
6 existing building and the proposed building.
7 The first column you have, our beautiful 1981
8 vintage Wendy's. Next to that is the 2024
9 proposal that's before you today, and then
10 the difference.

11 So when all is said and done,
12 the new proposed building would be 540 square
13 foot smaller, have 68 fewer chairs and seats,
14 38 fewer parking spaces, the drive-thru, and
15 180 fewer daily car trips. Obviously, I'm
16 not a traffic engineer, but a lot of that has
17 to do with the smaller size of the restaurant
18 and also with the advent of the delivery
19 services that Kim talked about earlier.

20 Instead of someone going there
21 for one trip, you have, whether it's Uber
22 Eats or DoorDash or whatever, doing multiple
23 pickups for multiple customers. So you're
24 consolidating three, four, five meals or
25 orders into one trip, thereby saving those,

1 those car trips. But again, I'm not a
2 traffic engineer, but these are the numbers
3 that come from the Traffic Institute, the
4 same handbook that we see in similar
5 applications.

6 Okay. You know when I do
7 outreach I always go looking for trouble. I
8 want to make sure that there -- that any
9 concern that might be out there is identified
10 and addressed. It's very easy -- you know
11 sometimes people say, well, this looks like
12 an easy one; I can't see why anybody would be
13 concerned about that -- it never happens,
14 which is good.

15 I wanted to -- just a couple
16 of things that I wanted to highlight. First
17 with NBC Connecticut, I met with Hank
18 Guerrero, the General Manager from Channel
19 30, and I'm just going to read this from my
20 report.

21 They -- their question or
22 concern was, will there be any blasting,
23 digging, dredging or other site work that
24 will cause vibrations to interfere with the
25 TV station's live broadcasts?

1 The answer is, there is no
2 blasting associated with the site work
3 proposed for the Wendy's. A full
4 geotechnical study of the property and
5 construction has been completed and found no
6 anticipated vibration transfer that would
7 interfere with NBC's live broadcasts.

8 I also gave them Kim's contact
9 information so that, if in the unlikely event
10 there was ever any concern during
11 construction, they have the direct line to go
12 into there. They were obviously concerned
13 coming off the construction that went on the
14 last couple of years on I-84, especially the
15 bridge addition right outside their front
16 door. That had interfered, and they just
17 wanted to check for this.

18 The mall had some great
19 questions, too. I met with Elizabeth Ryan,
20 the new General Manager -- or she's not so
21 new anymore. Her question was, when will
22 construction start and how long will it last?
23 And the answer to that is that it's expected
24 that construction will begin in the spring of
25 2025. There's a chance it might start this

1 coming spring, but in all likelihood it would
2 be 2025. Construction of this, this proposal
3 would last approximately 120 to 150 days. So
4 it's not a very long construction process.

5 Her other questions, which
6 were very good, was concern about South Road
7 and any construction that might have to
8 happen on that, whether it's tying up to the
9 sewer or doing the curb cuts. Are you going
10 to close South Road? And again, the answer
11 to that work that would impact South Road
12 includes the installation of new separate
13 entrance and exit curbs. This work will not
14 shut down South Road, but will close part of
15 the westbound lane for approximately seven
16 days. Traffic cones and on-site workers will
17 be in place to ensure safe and secure flow of
18 traffic.

19 The sewer line installation
20 may run through the neighboring property to
21 the west if we need any roadwork, but if
22 installation of the newer sewer line needs to
23 be installed via South Road, part of the
24 westbound lane, again, would need to be
25 closed for two to three weeks. Again,

1 traffic is not closed, but part of the lane
2 was. There would be cones out there; traffic
3 would flow.

4 Probably the most important
5 question that she had was, you know, when
6 might this be happening? And the developer
7 and the property owner has committed that
8 none of this work is going to be happening
9 during the months of November and December,
10 which obviously are peak time, peak traffic
11 time at the mall. And no part of South Road
12 will be closed due to construction of that.

13 So I believe that's it.

14 So I didn't break it too much.
15 Okay. Thank you. I'm happy to answer any
16 questions now, or wait until later.

17 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
18 Mr. Corsi. I think we will open it up.
19 We're going to take public comment if there
20 is any, and then we will open it up.

21 CHUCK CORSI: We still have a
22 little bit more.

23 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay.

24 Well, after the presentation.

25 CHUCK CORSI: It's all yours,

1 Anna.

2 ANNA PELHANK: Thank you. Hi,
3 everyone. I'm Anna Pelhank. I'm a senior
4 project engineer with Inspired by
5 Opportunity, which is also owned by Meritage
6 Hospitality Group.

7 And just a little background
8 about us, we're the largest Wendy's
9 franchisee and we operate over 400 Wendy's in
10 16 states. And I have to say, this is the
11 only Wendy's that we operate that doesn't
12 have a drive-through window. So we're very
13 excited to be here and present this project
14 and have the opportunity to update the
15 drive-through.

16 So I'm just going to walk you
17 over through our building design. We have
18 met with DRAC a couple times now, and we have
19 addressed all of their comments. They are
20 good with our design. The main comments that
21 they had was previously we had a ladder that
22 goes to access the roof, and it was on the
23 front, the south side, the south elevation,
24 which is the elevation that faces South
25 Drive. Since then, we have moved that ladder

1 to the back. So now it's in between the two
2 windows, the pay and pickup window.

3 Another change that they
4 requested was to screen the rooftop units.
5 For that, we have raised our parapets. They
6 used to be 18 feet. So now I believe they're
7 21 feet. And with that, it totally screens
8 all the equipment that is on the roof so you
9 cannot see it from the street.

10 And just I wanted to point
11 out, like, the material for our building.
12 We're using Nichiha. Nichiha is a fiber
13 cement board. It's a very good quality, very
14 durable. It's a good material. I have
15 samples here if you want to see it. We're
16 going to be using it in three colors.

17 The main building is going to
18 be the wood-looking Nichiha, and then we're
19 going to have -- just to give it some accent,
20 we're going to have a red blade, which is the
21 Wendy's brand. And it's going to have the
22 Wendy's face there. And then on the back of
23 the -- oh, you can see the ladder there. On
24 the back of the building, the two, the pay
25 window and the pickup window, those are kind

1 of like a bump out, out of the building, and
2 those are going to be on our great Nichiha.

3 We're also going to have an
4 LED tape that it's in the corner of the
5 building, just like on the front part of the
6 building, which is the dining room -- kind of
7 like in this area right here. This light is
8 concealed in the trim cap, and it's shielded,
9 so it only shines down so it meets the
10 dark-sky ordinance. And we also have some
11 light fixtures in the building. We're going
12 to have four sconce fixtures, four in the
13 front, four in the back that are silver.

14 Oh, and then we have our
15 cooler/freezer. Our cooler/freezer is a
16 manufactured metal building that is attached
17 to our building. And it typically is just a
18 metal -- we usually just leave a metal
19 building painted dark browns. In this
20 project we're going to cover it with the wood
21 Nichiha to make it look like it's part of the
22 main structure.

23 For signage, we're going to
24 have a monument on the entrance of the field,
25 of the site. It's going to be kind of like

1 right here. This monument is seven feet tall
2 and six and a half foot wide, and it's going
3 to be illuminated.

4 And on top of that, we also
5 have four signs that go on the building. One
6 sign is the big -- we call it cameo. It's
7 the big face that goes on the blade, the red
8 blade. And we also have the word "Wendy's"
9 in the side looking at South Road. We also
10 have another Wendy's sign in the back of the
11 building. And then one more cameo in the
12 front entrance, which this is going to be the
13 main entrance that people parking in the
14 parking lot are going to be using.

15 And just really quick, Meghan
16 mentioned this building was built 40 years
17 ago. Back then it probably wasn't a big deal
18 that we didn't have a drive-through. Now it
19 is a big deal, especially how the food
20 industry has changed. We now see that dining
21 customers have changed to be -- they used to
22 mostly be dine in. Now we only have about 10
23 percent of dine in. Another 70 percent is
24 drive-through, and 15 percent of our
25 customers do online orders.

1 So with the experience that we
2 have, the data that we have on this
3 percentage of services that we have, we feel
4 very -- Wendy's feels very comfortable with
5 this layout and with the building design. We
6 think that it's going to -- we're going to
7 have a good efficient service on this site.

8 Thank you.

9 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you
10 very much. Anna, can you say your last name
11 again?

12 ANNA PELHANK: Pelhank.

13 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Pelhank?

14 ANNA PELHANK: Yeah. Does
15 anyone like to have a closer look at the
16 material?

17 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. So
18 is that -- the presentation is complete from
19 the applicant?

20 Oh, no. Sorry.

21 MICHAEL DION: Sorry, we still
22 have more. For the record, Mike Dion with BL
23 Companies, a professional engineer,
24 professional traffic operations engineer. I
25 run the traffic group here.

1 And when we looked at the
2 traffic for this site, as it's been mentioned
3 a few times, the industry has changed over
4 the course of the last 40 years. There's
5 really not a lot of fast food restaurants
6 without drive-throughs that were constructed
7 anymore.

8 So when we started looking at
9 the traffic, we do look at the Institute of
10 Transportation Engineers, the ITE. They've
11 been around for 70 years and collecting
12 traffic trip generation data for the last,
13 I'll say 50 years. It's been 48 -- but so we
14 take that data.

15 We look at the size -- it's
16 based on the size of the building and the
17 number of studies that were done. So when we
18 looked at this traffic, you know they do have
19 a land use code for fast food without a
20 drive-through window. Not a lot of studies
21 for it, so typically that's why we don't look
22 at it, but we did put the data here for what
23 is anticipated for generated traffic for
24 that.

25 And you know, 1400 trips

1 during the day; 138, a.m., 106, p.m.;
2 Saturday, 175. So what we really wanted to
3 do, though, is compare it to fast food with
4 drive-through. And if we compared it to a
5 same sized building, the 3,200 square-foot,
6 which is the existing footprint of the
7 building, if that had a drive-through, that's
8 the bottom line for what it would be
9 anticipated to generate.

10 But what we do have here is a
11 mixture of the two. We have the fast food
12 without drive-through, fast food with
13 drive-through on the bottom. And then we
14 wanted to compare that number on the bottom
15 for 3,200 square feet with a 2,700
16 square-foot footprint for what we are putting
17 in.

18 And you can see that it
19 generates less traffic than obviously a
20 bigger drive-through with a fast food
21 restaurant. And it generates -- it shows
22 less than what the fast food without a
23 drive-through generates. But again, that's
24 data that's old, not a lot of data points.
25 The fast food restaurants with drive-throughs

1 do have about 200 data points in the ITE. So
2 we're very comfortable with that data that's
3 provided there. And we do anticipate that
4 the blue middle line is what would be
5 generated with this site.

6 I do just want to say that it
7 is, you know, a Wendy's. It's being replaced
8 with a Wendy's. It's not like we're taking
9 the Wendy's and putting in Raising Cane's
10 like Ellington just did, which is, you know,
11 a whole different animal and something you
12 definitely want to look closer at.

13 Go to Josh, I think.

14 JOSH WHEELER: How are you
15 doing? My name is Josh Wheeler. I'm a
16 licensed landscape architect with BL
17 Companies -- and I get the better part of
18 this.

19 So taking you kind of around
20 the site, we've been able to meet all the
21 criteria that are set in the town ordinance,
22 but what I want to show you is that along the
23 backside -- and I'll call it the rear and
24 side yard, because it kind of comes down to
25 the point -- we're creating an evergreen

1 screening and buffering towards 84. So that
2 kind of takes into account that entire run
3 for that side.

4 Along the frontage we're
5 introducing a bunch of new street trees. We
6 had to hold them back a little bit further
7 from the edge of the roadway just because
8 there's some overhead power lines. So we're
9 putting them on the other side of the
10 sidewalk, which actually give them a better
11 chance at survival, anyways.

12 And behind those street trees,
13 we've got some Florida -- Cornus florida
14 dogwoods. So it's kind of like basking that
15 area, giving it a little bit of color to the
16 space, and a smaller tree so it's not
17 obstructing any views.

18 We also have some trees along
19 the other side. So we've intermixed all of
20 the trees throughout the site that were
21 required either from the street frontage or
22 from within the -- we'll call it the rear and
23 side property lines.

24 And along the building, we've
25 created an evergreen and deciduous mix so

1 that it's easy to maintain, but will also
2 give you some winter interest and color
3 throughout the whole year.

4 So I think that's about it.

5 MS. HOPE: Again for the
6 record, Meghan Hope. I'm just going to make
7 a couple of final remarks before we open it
8 up to questions.

9 We did have just one
10 outstanding comment from Planning regarding
11 providing an updated lighting plan with
12 details. We have done that. We did present
13 that in the presentation.

14 We did have a comment from the
15 Town Engineer regarding the welcome to
16 Farmington sign, which is obviously on the
17 Farmington side. It's over adjacent to the
18 exit driveway. We do have a note on the plan
19 that we're going to meet in the field with
20 representatives from the Town of Farmington
21 to place that and make sure it doesn't block
22 any of the sight lines. We might have to
23 pull it a little bit further into our site,
24 but there is room for that as well.

25 Finally, I just wanted to make

1 note of the waivers we're requesting as part
2 of the SDD. Those can be found in the zoning
3 information chart, which is SP-1 of the plan
4 set. Just really two minor waivers there,
5 and they have to do with the parking, because
6 we actually don't have any parking spaces
7 located in West Hartford. Everything is in
8 Farmington.

9 We did include information in
10 our application letter that the continuation
11 of this use is in harmony, not only with the
12 existing development and all the properties
13 that are adjacent, but also with the
14 comprehensive plan. The TP and Z did forward
15 the Council a recommendation that the plan is
16 consistent with the POCD.

17 So I think with that, I'll
18 open it up to any questions.

19 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
20 Attorney Hope.

21 We're going to look for public
22 comment first, and then we'll get to any
23 Council questions.

24 And while our Corporation
25 Counsel is checking the sign-in,

1 Mr. Davidoff, I know you received one written
2 comment. If you could share that, and if
3 there's any others?

4 THE CLERK: Madam Mayor, we
5 have received letters in support from the
6 Elmwood Business Association, as well as a
7 letter in support from the West Hartford
8 Chamber of Commerce.

9 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
10 Mr. Davidoff. There is one person that
11 signed up, but I think you're part of the
12 presentation, Kimberly.

13 So is there anybody in the
14 audience that would like to speak to this
15 public hearing?

16
17 (No response.)
18

19 PRESIDENT CANTOR: All right.
20 Then we will open it up to the Council for
21 questions. Does anybody have any questions?

22 Mr. Walters?

23 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Thank you,
24 Madam Mayor. Through you, I have just two
25 questions, actually.

1 One is looking at the trash.
2 How is that going to be collected? Because
3 we have a one-way going in there, and then it
4 seems like they would have to do a little
5 shimmy to get it to back up.

6 I mean, typically they back
7 up.

8 MS. HOPE: Yeah, sure. I'll
9 have Kim come explain.

10 KIM MASIUK: Yeah, they can
11 nose right in and they will do a slight
12 back --

13 COUNCILOR WALTERS: They'll do
14 a front lift?

15 KIM MASIUK: Yeah, they'll do
16 a front lift. And there's two, you know, two
17 dumpsters in there. We can fit two
18 ten-yards. They will back up slightly, but
19 there's actually, on our detail plan, you can
20 see there's a half-sized loading space that
21 actually fits in there just because of the
22 shape of it.

23 So it's kind of -- it does
24 look odd because it's on a slant, but it's --
25 and it's also not during peak hours, so.

1 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Right.

2 Okay. Great. Thank you.

3 The second question that I had
4 is, I don't know how much pedestrian traffic
5 there is that goes from the mall across the
6 street. Is there consideration for a
7 crosswalk? I mean, have we -- that would be
8 on the town side, obviously, but it just
9 seems to me that we're not taking that into
10 account if there isn't.

11 MS. HOPE: Sure. So we do, as
12 we mentioned, have this sidewalk along the
13 frontage. We have that in there, not because
14 there's a lot of pedestrian activity in the
15 area, but because it's required by the
16 drive-through regulation. So that's why we
17 have it in there.

18 We did, as a team, look into
19 that issue a little bit. Could we connect
20 that to somewhere to make it make a little
21 bit more sense? If you go to the south,
22 across South Road, you obviously have the
23 mall campus, but there's zero sidewalks in
24 that part of it. And the sidewalks on New
25 Britain Avenue are way, way far away.

1 So I did reach out to town
2 staff just to kind of confirm that
3 engineering or anybody wasn't looking for a
4 connection, and they said they weren't.

5 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Okay.

6 All right. Thank you.

7 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
8 Mr. Walters. Just make sure you turn off
9 your mic.

10 And Ms. Blanks?

11 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Thank you,
12 Madam Mayor. Thank you for the presentation.
13 A couple of questions I have, and Councilor
14 Walters asked some of the ones that I did
15 have. Delivery -- you asked that.

16 What are the times of the day
17 or hours of construction?

18 That's my first question.

19 ANNA PELHANK: Typically
20 constructions run from, like, 6:30, 7:30 in
21 the morning until four or five.

22 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Four or
23 five in the evening?

24 ANNA PELHANK: In the evening,
25 yes.

1 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Okay. And
2 through you, Madam Mayor, signage. You
3 talked about the signage at the entrance. I
4 believe you said it's illuminating and you
5 talked about some others on the building
6 itself. My concern looking at the rendering
7 is the drive-through and the driveway leading
8 to the parking. Is there any signage when
9 those two connect?

10 So -- and what I'm
11 anticipating is your peak hours at the mall,
12 Black Friday, Christmas holiday shopping.
13 Right now, you know, no one is really going
14 over there because there's no drive-through,
15 but I'm anticipating that kind of traffic is
16 going to pick up.

17 So is there any consideration?
18 Is there any signage going to be erected, or
19 is it just going to be plain the way it's
20 being shown here?

21 KIM MASIUK: So, yeah. I
22 mean, we have typical traffic controls where
23 you would have -- let me go back to our other
24 slide -- oh, I could see it down here.

25 So of course, this is entrance

1 driveway only. Right here we'll have that
2 monument sign right there. And then as you
3 come through, there's a stop bar over here so
4 that the bypass lane has the right of way,
5 essentially.

6 You can come through. We have
7 the signage for ADA parking, also for these
8 customer pickup mobile orders over here. And
9 then again, one-way signage out here. You'll
10 have your do-not-enters so that nobody's
11 coming in, in this location.

12 But that's really essentially
13 all that's needed for this at this time.

14 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Okay.
15 Through you, Madam Mayor. So just that I'm
16 clear, you're saying that a stop bar is at
17 that exit area once someone picks up their
18 food at the drive-through window.

19 Is that correct?

20 KIM MASIUK: Yes. Right.
21 See -- did that work? Yeah, that worked.
22 Okay. I wasn't sure. But that horizontal --

23 MS. HOPE: That's what the
24 black bar is.

25 KIM MASIUK: Yeah, the black

1 bar right there is the stop bar with the stop
2 sign right there.

3 ANNA PELHANK: And just
4 typically between -- typically we have
5 pavement markings showing drive-through, keep
6 going straight.

7 If it's necessary, we could
8 add directional signs, but for the most part
9 we see that just pavement markings are
10 enough.

11 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Madam
12 Mayor, one more question?

13 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Yes,
14 please. That's fine.

15 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Through
16 you. I'm sorry. This is the final question
17 that I have. When I believe -- I don't
18 remember who the presenter was about the
19 decrease, I believe, in pickup. And I just
20 wanted to clarify that that was -- that the
21 holiday traffic was considered in terms of
22 both decreased pickup times. Correct? That
23 can be directed to anybody.

24 MICHAEL DION: For the record,
25 Mike Dion. I don't believe we talked about

1 pickup times, but we did talk about the
2 traffic generation.

3 And we didn't consider Black
4 Friday. Typically we look at typical times
5 over the course of the year. We want to look
6 at an average day, because if we designed
7 every site to Black Friday, South Road would
8 be six lanes, three in each direction. So
9 there would be a sea of pavement everywhere.

10 So we look at typically an
11 average day. And when we showed our graph
12 with the a.m., p.m., and mid -- Saturday
13 midday, you know, those are the typical peak
14 hours for traffic. A.m. would be for your
15 commuters going to work, 7 to 9 a.m. Four to
16 6 p.m. is people coming home from work,
17 stopping to get their dinner. And then
18 Saturday is typically the shopping peak, 11
19 to 1 p.m.

20 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Thank you.
21 All set.

22 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
23 Ms. Blanks. Are there questions for --
24 Ms. Fay?

25 COUNCILOR FAY: Thank you. I

1 know we're all always concerned about our
2 grand list. So could you let me know what
3 the value of the old building was versus what
4 the new one will be?

5 Do we know that number?

6 MS. HOPE: I don't think we
7 know that number. We did keep the building
8 in West Hartford, so that's definitely more
9 of a grand list than Farmington has.

10 COUNCILOR FAY: I did notice
11 that. Yes, that's good. That's good.

12 CHUCK CORSI: Actually, that's
13 a very good question, Mary. And that
14 question came up at the Elmwood Business
15 Association meeting. And fortunately, we had
16 the Town Manager there. But you have an old,
17 depreciated building with outdated equipment
18 being replaced by a new state-of-the-art,
19 high-tech building.

20 I asked the Town Manager, and
21 he can chime in now but -- we're not making
22 any promises, but you can probably speak
23 better than anyone.

24 MR. LEDWITH: Thank you,
25 Mr. Corsi. Through you, Madam Mayor, and to

1 Councilor Fay's question. Yeah, we do -- I
2 didn't have a chance to connect with our
3 assessor, but we do believe anecdotally that
4 the value of the new building will be higher
5 than the existing outdated 1981 Wendy's
6 old-style building. So thank you.

7 COUNCILOR FAY: Sure. And
8 then just as a followup for the hospitality
9 group, I'm sure you guys are expecting
10 increased sales from where you are today.
11 Could you talk a little bit more about that?

12 ANNA PELHANK: Yes. Well,
13 obviously this site right now doesn't have a
14 drive-through.

15 Okay. 25 to 28K -- thousand a
16 week. But what we've seen when we put a new
17 building or even when we do a renovation of a
18 building that we already have, we see a lift
19 on sales of 20 percent. We're hoping to be
20 better here.

21 COUNCILOR FAY: Thank you.

22 PRESIDENT CANTOR: All set,
23 Ms. Fay?

24 COUNCILOR FAY: Yes.

25 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay.

1 Any other questions?

2 Okay. Ms. Polun?

3 COUNCILOR POLUN: Yes, thank
4 you. Can you tell me how many employees does
5 this restaurant have right now? And are
6 there any plans to try to relocate them
7 temporarily while the new building is being
8 built over the course of four or five months?

9 MS. HOPE: Yes. So I'll have
10 Anna come up and answer.

11 ANNA PELHANK: So right now we
12 have between 25 employees to 30. And during
13 construction where our store is closed, we're
14 going to be relocating all those employees to
15 different stores around the area so they can
16 keep their job.

17 And then once we're open -- or
18 ready to open, we'll have them to come back.

19 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you.

20 Thank you, Ms. Polun.

21 Any other questions?

22
23 (No response.)

24
25 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay, I

1 just had a couple. Was there any
2 consideration for a patio or outdoor eating
3 area? I was a little surprised not to see
4 that on the plans.

5 ANNA PELHANK: Yes. The
6 reason why we decided not to do a patio in
7 this restaurant is because of winter weather.
8 We're not expecting it to be used as much as,
9 like, having that store in Florida.

10 And for the cost of having to
11 put, you know, a patio in the use, it was
12 just not a good value for our money.

13 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. And
14 the air conditioning units, where are they
15 and where are they facing?

16 MS. HOPE: Yeah, so those are
17 all located on the roof. And we did raise
18 the parapet. That was a request from DRAC.
19 So they're going to be totally screened. So
20 they're going to be up on this portion of the
21 roof here behind that taller portion.

22 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you.
23 And you said updated -- obviously you're
24 going to have state-of-the-art HVAC. Are
25 there any other sustainability elements to

1 the building?

2 KIM MASIUK: Just as far as
3 the site goes, we have -- well, obviously
4 they have old metal halide lights right now.
5 So it will be all the LED fixtures.

6 I don't know if there's
7 anything else related to the building for
8 green initiatives?

9 ANNA PELHANK: The other thing
10 that I can think of is like the hood system
11 that we use for exhaust fans for our grills.
12 We use a very efficient system that, you
13 know, works better eliminating all the smoke.

14 Other than that, that's it.

15 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you.
16 All right. That's all the questions I had.

17 The only other thing was, do
18 we need a West Hartford sign on the
19 Farmington side, leaving West Hartford.
20 No -- well, welcome on the other side. I
21 don't know. Maybe we do.

22 So actually that's a serious
23 question. Do we need -- I mean, I don't know
24 if that's -- do we have any West Hartford
25 signs on that, on that border?

1 MS. HOPE: Yeah, we don't
2 have -- nothing got picked up on the survey,
3 just the Farmington sign. And I think that
4 has to do with probably the direction of the
5 road. You know, when you're on that side
6 you're driving west towards Farmington.

7 I don't know if there's
8 anything on the other side of South Road.
9 There's not a lot of space over there.

10 PRESIDENT CANTOR: There's a
11 berm, I think.

12 All right.

13 Any other questions?

14
15 (No response.)
16

17 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay.
18 Hearing none -- and I know you already
19 mentioned it, but we're going to read into
20 the record a letter dated February 20, 2024,
21 from the Design Review Advisory Committee
22 recommending approval; a letter dated
23 February 21, 2024, from the Town Planning and
24 Zoning Commission recommending approval; and
25 a letter dated February 2, 2024, from the

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

5 I just want to add one thing.
6 We do have a lot of places in town with
7 patios. We have at least seven
8 extraordinary, beautiful months, and
9 sometimes our winters don't have a lot of
10 snow. So I mean, at some future date,
11 there's a beautiful area for you to have some
12 outdoor dining.

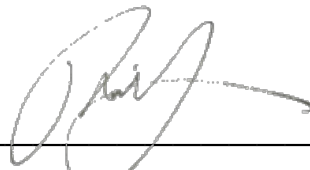
13 But that is -- and I think in
14 the mall that would be a welcome contrast to
15 mall dining as well. That's my own little --
16 anyway.

17 But with that, we will close
18 the public hearing. We'll take a five-minute
19 break and we will meet back for the council
20 meeting. Thank you very much.

21
22 (End: 7:46 p.m.)
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 47 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original verbatim notes taken of the Public Hearing in Re: APPLICATION FILED ON BEHALF OF INSPIRED BY OPPORTUNITY, LLC, LESSEE OF PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS WENDY'S RESTAURANT, TO MODIFY SPECIAL DESIGN DISTRICT NUMBER 29 LOCATED AT 331 SOUTH ROAD TO DEMOLISH THE EXISTING RESTAURANT BUILDING AND CREATE A NEW 2,680 SQUARE-FOOT RESTAURANT BUILDING WITH DRIVE-THROUGH FACILITY, held before the West Hartford Town Council, at Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Room 314, West Hartford, Connecticut, on February 27, 2024.



Robert G. Dixon, CVR-M 857
My Commission Expires:
6/30/2025