

VERBATIM PROCEEDINGS

WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
RE: CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC
SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

JUNE 23, 2015

WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
50 SOUTH MAIN STREET
WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

POST REPORTING SERVICE
HAMDEN, CT (800) 262-4102

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 . . .Verbatim proceedings of a hearing re:
2 Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
3 was held before the Town Council Meeting held at 50 South
4 Main Street, West Hartford, Connecticut on June 23, 2015 .
5 . . .

6
7
8
9 MR. SCOTT SLIFKA: I'll call to order the
10 7:00 public hearing. This is an application on behalf of
11 Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
12 to amend Special Development District No. 93 at 26 Caya
13 Avenue to demolish the entryway and staircase, construct a
14 two-story, 1,235-square-foot addition, demolish the
15 existing detached garage, and expand the parking lot by
16 adding four spaces. A roll call, please? Ms. King?

17 MS. MADONNA KING: Mr. Barnes?

18 MR. CHRIS BARNES: Present.

19 MS. KING: Ms. Cantor?

20 MS. SHARI CANTOR: Here.

21 MS. KING: Mr. Captain?

22 MR. HARRY CAPTAIN: Here.

23 MS. KING: Ms. Casperson? Absent. Mr.
24 Davidoff?

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 MR. LEON DAVIDOFF: Here.

2 MS. KING: Mr. Doar?

3 MR. BURKE DOAR: Here.

4 MS. KING: Ms. Hall?

5 MS. DENISE HALL: Here.

6 MS. KING: Ms. Kindall?

7 MS. CLARE KINDALL: Here.

8 MS. KING: Mr. Slifka?

9 MR. SLIFKA: Here. Okay, now, my
10 understanding is Ms. Casperson is on her way, but,
11 obviously, we're here with eight, so I would go -- I'd ask
12 the Applicant if they would like to proceed with eight
13 members of the council.

14 DR. JOHN TINDALL-GIBSON: That would be
15 fine.

16 MR. SLIFKA: Okay, thank you. In which
17 case, then -- oh, I'm sorry. Yes, if you could come up,
18 introduce yourself, and repeat what you just said?

19 DR. TINDALL-GIBSON: That would be fine.
20 Eight would be fine, thank you.

21 MR. SLIFKA: And, sorry, your name for the
22 record?

23 DR. TINDALL-GIBSON: My name is John
24 Tindall-Gibson, and I'm with the Connecticut Association

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 of Public School Superintendents.

2 MR. SLIFKA: Thank you. Okay, then, with
3 that, we turn it right back over to you for the
4 presentation.

5 DR. TINDALL-GIBSON: Thank you very much.
6 We, as you know, have our offices at 26 Caya Avenue.
7 We've been there about 25 years. We are an Association
8 that represents all of the school Superintendents in the
9 State of Connecticut, that's 167 of them, and we have
10 other senior education leaders in our group. There's a
11 360 total membership, largely because we've been able to
12 bring in some additional grant funding from sources
13 throughout New England.

14 We've been able to expand our operation a
15 little bit, in terms of preparing Superintendents for the
16 work these days, as well as work with the Department of
17 Education and some legislative committees and so on.

18 Because of the additional work, we are
19 seeking permission to make some changes to our offices,
20 and we have procured LLB Architects, and it's my pleasure
21 to introduce to you at this time Mr. Greg Smolley, who is
22 a principal architect with that firm, and he will explain
23 to you what we'd like your permission to do and answer any
24 questions you might have. Thank you.

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 MR. GREG SMOLLEY: Thank you, John. Good
2 evening. As John said, I am Greg Smolley. I'm a
3 principal with LLB Architects, and, if I could, I have a
4 handout that matches the boards, so we can refer to things
5 in colors.

6 I will follow your lead, Mr. Chairman, in
7 terms of how quickly or how deeply we go into each and
8 every board as we move along through here.

9 As those make their way around, I will try
10 to remember to talk loud enough to pick up as we do this.
11 If I get to something and you know it and you're familiar
12 with it and you want me to keep moving, just indicate, and
13 I will keep moving to suit.

14 As John said, it's a piece of property
15 located on Caya Avenue. It's just under an acre of land
16 that has been evolving over the last couple of years, last
17 25 years or so, through a number of acquisitions of land,
18 combining of land.

19 It is bordered in by Route 84, the exit
20 ramp from 84, Caya Avenue, and a private residence to the
21 east, so it's essentially a landlocked little island in
22 the center or just to the south edge of town.

23 It sits up a little bit higher than its
24 surrounding neighbors, good tree growth all around it, not

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 very visible from the parking lot. It's not very visible
2 from the road. We did the public outreach. We have all
3 the certified mail cards on that. We had a few people
4 show up, one person mostly concerned with how many trees
5 were coming down.

6 We spent quite a bit of time walking the
7 site, talking about that, and three people, who had lived
8 in the neighborhood since before CAPSS had bought the
9 property, and happy to see it being maintained and taken
10 care of in that manner.

11 The property, as it is configured at this
12 point, has parking for 33 cars on it. It's a two-story
13 house, built somewhere in the early 1900s. It shows all
14 the configuration of a turn of the century residence; four
15 small rooms on each floor, connecting stairway in between.

16 The parking lot runs parallel to Route 84,
17 running off to the west, sitting on about the highest
18 piece of the land, with some mature growth between that
19 and Caya Avenue.

20 The garage that John referred to is in the
21 northeast corner of the site. It's essentially being used
22 for dead storage and storage of some materials, not nearly
23 as crucial to the operation of CAPSS as it was when the
24 building was first put into use.

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 First floor has the main building off to
2 the left of the page in front of you, with the four rooms.
3 That's the quintessential 1900s residence.

4 The large conference room off to the side
5 was put in in the early 2000s. It's a single-floor
6 conference room, used just about once a month, twice a
7 month for ongoing training, and the small entryway that
8 was put on as the last step was to facilitation connection
9 to the upstairs.

10 It's a fairly tight footprint. It was
11 pretty good when CAPSS was doing most of its work outside
12 of the area. Now, as it has more staff coming into to do
13 some work and then leaving out to do legislative work or
14 working with districts, the need for a little bit office
15 space has risen.

16 Second floor is a relatively simple floor
17 plan, administrative space. It's their finance and
18 continuing ed. people upstairs, along with John as a staff
19 associate, and their legislative associates sharing some
20 space, so we have a bunch of relatively inefficient floor
21 space upstairs and some small offices that don't really
22 function for what we need in a modern office.

23 We look at the aesthetics. The existing
24 northwest view is from the parking lot, the most private

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 side of the building. It shows the cylindrical stair
2 tower that was added on to the building, and, going around
3 to the northeast, you see the backside of the conference
4 room.

5 The two elevations give an idea of the
6 massing of the building. It's kind of thrown together
7 through the couple of steps that were done to get us to
8 the place where we are now. It's not a very cohesive
9 design at all.

10 It is previously approved through the
11 Town's process for the SDD. The materials matched on the
12 previous approvals. The thing that was not completed on
13 the last time through was all the plantings, and, so, this
14 step now, comments we got from the Town were to step back
15 a bit, address some of the plantings, and that's been
16 reflected in the site plan as we move forward, but a
17 rather unassuming brown-over-brown, with a white trim
18 house, fits right into the neighborhood. It's actually
19 one of the smaller structures on the street.

20 Plan to move forward works from the
21 previous approved SDD modification, which moved us up to
22 33 parking spaces, which far exceeds the Town guidelines.
23 It was part of the approval, so it becomes the base for
24 where we work.

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 We're looking at taking down the
2 cylindrical stair tower and taking down the garage. In
3 exchange for that, proposing to move the handicapped
4 parking spaces from out in the field of parking over
5 closer to the doorway.

6 As it is now, a non-ambulatory person has
7 to move across the main driveway, and we have a cross-
8 slope situation that's probably not quite code compliant,
9 and we have the potential for not being able to be seen as
10 you pull into the driveway trying to get off of Caya
11 Avenue, so our major objective with the handicapped
12 parking is to move them further away from the main
13 driveway and to segregate that function away from the main
14 in and out.

15 We also have a dumpster that is moved all
16 the way down to the west. It's been sitting out there
17 without any fencing. Part of this proposal is to fence
18 that in and gate it to protect it from view and to rebuild
19 that end of the parking lot. It's starting to settle a
20 bit, so we're looking to rebuild that end of the parking
21 lot and increase our parking by the four spaces.

22 We're proposing to keep the existing
23 western driveway as a two-way ingress/egress and take the
24 existing eastern driveway and make that a one way exit

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 only. That gets the exiting traffic further away from the
2 exit ramp from Route 84, so that alleviates some of the
3 backup with the site distance down to that exit ramp and
4 gives us a little bit better exiting pattern.

5 On the ground floor, the major push is the
6 rectangular space moving off to the north. It's
7 essentially an entry lobby, a reception area, and a
8 conference room. Mallory was just about to correct me to
9 move out of the basement. Thank you, Mallory.

10 So if we move to the first floor, we have a
11 handicapped-compliant ramp to get us up onto the first
12 floor instead of stairs, so the main parking lot is
13 addressed by the set of stairs, into a reception area, a
14 work space and layout space behind it, behind that, which
15 allows us to take down the garage and move some of that
16 storage inside, a small conference room and the IT office.

17 As the CAPSS is applying more and more
18 support to the districts in IT and moving over to more of
19 an electronic world, they're finding that role is becoming
20 more important to them.

21 The conference room stays the same. The
22 bathrooms get rebuilt to be ADA compliant, and the one
23 bathroom, existing bathroom now becomes the Office
24 Manager's office.

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 Elevations are a little bit more unified
2 now, continuing the ridge line out to the back where the
3 cylindrical staircase is now and working on unifying the
4 building, making it look a little bit more like it might
5 have, had it been built to a bigger footprint back in the
6 1900s, to tie the visible portions of the building
7 together a little bit better.

8 Colors will follow what is out there now,
9 and the difference in siding materials. The existing
10 building is in vinyl. The new building is proposed to be
11 cementitious siding that matches what the Town is
12 allowing.

13 Our site plan illustrated shows the
14 majority of the new plantings. We have a Japanese Maple
15 at the back of the building near the cylindrical stair
16 tower. That was part of the previous approval. That
17 needs to come down to build the building, so we're
18 proposing a new specimen tree in the parking lot that is
19 actually a little bit more visible than the existing tree,
20 preserving all of the large trees across the front and
21 replacing some trees along the backside on the Route 84
22 property line, that some of the scrub trees need to come
23 out to get the storm water control basin into there, the
24 run of gravel and whatnot, so when those small trees and

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 shrubs come out, we'll be planting another row of trees in
2 there.

3 And when the garage comes down, we'll plant
4 another tree over to the eastern side, and we'll rebuild
5 the fence between CAPSS and their neighbor.

6 Our surveyor says it's probably debatable
7 whose property it's on, and CAPSS has stepped in and said
8 they'll replace it and paint it to match, so we'll end up
9 with a new fence on the east side from where the
10 deteriorated fence is now.

11 And, finally, a rendering of what we think
12 it will look like from the parking lot side. A bit
13 different than what we have now with the cylindrical stair
14 tower. It's a little bit more of a unified design and
15 holds together a bit better than we think that the
16 existing building does now.

17 So, with that, that's all the boards that
18 we have. It's a pretty quick run through of a pretty
19 straightforward building, and I'll take any questions you
20 may have.

21 MR. SLIFKA: Thank you. I'm just going to
22 ask an informational question and turn it over to my
23 colleagues. So it occurs to me, if I'm following this
24 right, that I've probably driven past this property tens

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 of thousands of times and never knew it was there, so is
2 this the property where, if you take the exit off of 84
3 and it becomes -- it's only a one way street at that
4 point, and it's immediately on your left as you come up to
5 the light?

6 MR. SMOLLEY: You are correct, and hence
7 the reason or the desire for a sign in this package, so
8 that you know where you're going.

9 MR. SLIFKA: But then there's one more
10 building on the corner, correct? It's like a mortgage
11 company and financial service company?

12 MR. SMOLLEY: Yes. There's the CAPSS
13 property, there's a private residence, and then there's
14 the mortgage building, so there's two buildings.

15 MR. SLIFKA: You really are hidden there,
16 or I'm not very observant, also. It's entirely possible.
17 Okay, thank you for clearing that up. Did anybody have
18 any questions at this time?

19 MS. HALL: I just had one.

20 MR. SLIFKA: Yeah, go ahead, Mrs. Hall.

21 MS. HALL: I didn't quite understand what
22 you said in regard to the siding. Can you explain what
23 the siding is going to be?

24 MR. SMOLLEY: Sure. The building, when it

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 was last approved at the SDD hearing, was allowed to be
2 clad in a combination of vinyl siding, and the cylindrical
3 stair tower is plywood, like a texture 111 plywood siding,
4 and the vinyl siding meets with no one's desire anymore
5 for that portion of town in an SDD, so the proposal is to
6 keep the street side as it is now, to leave that siding on
7 there.

8 Everyone in the neighborhood is familiar
9 with that. And the new part of the building would be clad
10 in a cementitious board. It looks like wooden siding, but
11 it's cement. It's got a much longer lifespan, much more
12 durable and easier to take care of.

13 MR. SLIFKA: Okay. Any other questions?
14 Mrs. Cantor?

15 MS. CANTOR: I did not see any air
16 conditioning unit. You said the dumpster was moved and
17 then it's going to be screened, but you didn't mention any
18 air conditioning. I don't know if you have it. Is there
19 any?

20 MR. SMOLLEY: There is -- air conditioning
21 units right now are -- bear with me until I get back to
22 the pretty picture. The existing air conditioning units
23 are situated in the front of the building to the street
24 side behind a row of plantings, and you'll see on there it

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 says concrete, it's designated as concrete. That's a pad
2 that has the emergency generator and the air conditioning
3 units.

4 The air conditioning units are being
5 replaced as part of the project, so the outdoor units will
6 actually get smaller and quieter. The units that are
7 there are quite a few years old and are proportionately
8 probably twice as loud as what will replace them, so
9 they'll still be behind the shrubberies and still in the
10 same location where they are now.

11 MS. CANTOR: Okay, thank you.

12 MR. SLIFKA: Okay. Any further questions?
13 Mr. Davidoff?

14 MR. DAVIDOFF: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I
15 have a few. The first is you're going to be making
16 renovations to the second floor, as well, and I notice
17 that you're making considerable renovations to the first
18 floor to allow for handicap accessibility.

19 Would there be any issues about handicap
20 accessibility to the second floor, or would there be a
21 need for anybody, who is handicapped, to reach the second
22 floor, and how would they do so?

23 MR. SMOLLEY: That's an interesting
24 question. As a semi-public entity, we went through that

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 for quite awhile on whether or not it would be required to
2 reach the second floor.

3 None of the spaces on either one of the
4 floors is task-specific, so it would be what we call a
5 program accessibility. If a non-ambulatory person were to
6 be hired by the agency, the tasks and responsibility of
7 that person could be accommodated on a ground floor
8 office.

9 If a non-ambulatory member of the public or
10 a private agency came for a meeting, all the meeting space
11 is on the ground floor, so the separation of the building
12 the way it is now is ADA compliant. It's compliant with
13 Federal 504.

14 MR. DAVIDOFF: Thank you for your reply. I
15 just wanted to get that into the record, that the issue
16 was examined and discussed and there was a plan in place.

17 With respect to the dumpster area, I'm
18 assuming that that's only for things that are not
19 recyclable?

20 MR. SMOLLEY: That's correct. The majority
21 of the trash generated by the organization is paper, and
22 most of that goes right through recycling, and, as they
23 move further and further to all electronic communication,
24 which is a big driver in this, is to get teleconferencing

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 working, we'll see less and less paper recycling.

2 We're down to about five people at the
3 office building, per se, so the compostable waste or
4 garbage is quite light.

5 I would anticipate in the future that the
6 dumpster size would get smaller, reducing their operating
7 costs.

8 MR. DAVIDOFF: So I just want to make sure
9 I'm clear. So there is traditional waste removal, as well
10 as recyclable removal?

11 MR. SMOLLEY: Yes.

12 MR. DAVIDOFF: Okay and that all happens in
13 that same area?

14 MR. SMOLLEY: That's correct.

15 MR. DAVIDOFF: And the last, I didn't
16 notice anything, other than a letter we received from
17 somebody at 105 Prospect, Howard Financial, with respect
18 to the neighborhood outreach memo.

19 Did you have anything prepared, or are
20 there things for the record with respect to what the
21 neighbors' concerns were and how they were handled in
22 neighborhood meetings?

23 MR. SMOLLEY: We did submit a memo on the
24 outreach to the Planning Office that went through that. I

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 don't know if I have that memo with me. I thought it
2 would end up in your package. It was part of a six or
3 seven-page submittal to the Town Planner.

4 MR. DAVIDOFF: No, that's the letter you
5 sent. I saw that, but is there any testimony in the
6 record, as to what the neighborhood concerns were, what
7 was the turnout, were there issues?

8 MR. SMOLLEY: It was part of the package.
9 It's Appendix B, page seven of eight. The backside of it
10 has the proposed sign, and the front side has my
11 letterhead. LLB Architects is the letterhead.

12 MR. DAVIDOFF: So instead of trying to
13 search for it, because I don't see it -- okay, so, I just
14 want to state for the record, according to the letter that
15 was submitted to Planning as of June 10th, there was a
16 neighborhood meeting, and it appears that there were no
17 issues by the neighbors, and they were assured that there
18 would be no new lighting and no additional tree cutting,
19 other than what was discussed this evening. Okay, thank
20 you, sir.

21 MR. SMOLLEY: That's correct.

22 MR. DAVIDOFF: Thank you.

23 MR. SLIFKA: Okay. Thank you, Mr.
24 Davidoff. Anyone else? Okay. Seeing none, then, Mr.

HEARING RE: WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015

1 O'Brien, did we grab the sign-up sheet yet?

2 MR. JOE O'BRIEN: No one has signed up.

3 MR. SLIFKA: Is there anybody, who did not
4 sign up on the sheet, who would like to speak to the
5 subject matter of this public hearing? Okay.

6 I will read in for the record a letter,
7 dated June 2, 2015, from TPZ recommending approval, a
8 letter, dated June 18, 2015, from CRCOG finding no
9 apparent conflict with regional plans and policies or the
10 concerns of neighboring towns, and a letter, dated June
11 18, 2015, from DRAC by unanimous vote to recommend
12 approval.

13 Nothing further from my colleagues, and
14 nothing further from the Applicant at this time? Okay,
15 then, if that's the case, I will, going once, going twice,
16 close the public hearing. Thank you.

17 (Whereupon, the hearing adjourned at 7:25
18 p.m.)